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THE TABERNACLE PRE-FIGURED

Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus

By

L. Michael Morales, B.A., M.A.R., M.Div.

Lewis

/

A dissertation submitted in completion of requirements for the degree
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UNIVERSITY
OF BRISTOL
TRINITY COLLEGE

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED:

DATE: 9 MAY 2011

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Esichael Esparalio", written in a cursive style.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) accounts of Genesis and Exodus in relation to cosmic mountain ideology, demonstrating in each narrative the cosmogonic pattern: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship, and arguing that these narratives function to explain the logic and necessity of the tabernacle cultus, temples being the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain. While cosmic mountain ideology is an acknowledged backdrop to the religions of the ancient Near East, and to the tabernacle/temple cultus of Israel in particular, sufficient attention to its function in these biblical narratives has been wanting. The cosmic mountain will be seen to serve as a symbol for approaching God so that the idea of a “gate liturgy” (in a similar fashion to that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”) is highlighted in each narrative: Adam and Eve must descend the mount upon their transgression, making the return ascent in worship a key feature in the drama leading up to the tabernacle account (and, perhaps, beyond); Noah, being found just and blameless in his generation, is thus allowed entrance into the ark, something of a “prototype” of the tabernacle; and Moses alone is permitted ascent to the summit of Mount Sinai, a role later mimicked in the instructions for the high priest’s annual entrance into the holy of holies. To dwell in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus thus presents something of a full-circle, albeit mediated, return to the original intent of creation.

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Completing this dissertation has been an intellectual journey trekked amidst that other crossing, through the wilderness of this age. Expectedly, the one who arrives—after the trials and ordeals, along with the manifest grace of God through them all—is not quite the same person who departed. The urgency and exigencies of the latter journey oft (and justly) prohibiting my full devotion to the former, I am keenly aware of its deficiencies, and yet still hopeful that what is profitable is so to such an extent the reader will find the travails of the travel worth embarking upon.

Throughout this labor, the happy providence of having Gordon J. Wenham as my thesis supervisor has been a constant source of thanksgiving and gratitude—it should be obvious, then, the aforementioned deficiencies are merely the result of my not having incorporated his counsel sufficiently.

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מה-נֹרָא הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה
אֵין זֶה כִּי אִם-בֵּית אֱלֹהִים
זֶה שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם

פֶּתַח-חַיִּי לִי שַׁעַר-צֶדֶק
אֲבֹא-בָם אוֹרֶה יְהוָה
זֶה-הַשַּׁעַר לִיהוָה
צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Ideology

I. The Cosmic Mountain

 A. In the Ancient Near East

 1. Cosmic Mountain Characteristics

 2. From Mountain to Temple

 3. Vertical Typology

 B. In Ancient Israel

 1. Eden

 2. Sinai

 3. Zion

II. The Cosmic Waters

 A. In the Ancient Near East

 B. In Ancient Israel

 C. The Judicial River Ordeal

III. The Gate Liturgy

IV. Scholarly Contribution

 A. Brief Literature Review

 B. Cosmic Mountain Ideology and Biblical Studies

Introduction to Cosmic Mountain Ideology

INTRODUCTION

Our thesis seeks to demonstrate how the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives prefigure the tabernacle cultus of Israel by means of cosmic mountain ideology. Simply put, given that the cosmic mountain informed the temple cults of the ancient Near East, including that of Israel, then one might expect mountain narratives to contain temple symbolism. Approached canonically, the mountain narratives of the Hebrew Bible that precede the establishment of the tabernacle/temple cultus may be said to prefigure or anticipate that cultus. While a chapter will be dedicated to an exegesis and literary reading for each particular narrative in light of cosmic mountain ideology,¹ this chapter will serve to introduce the concept itself.

¹ While receiving gladly the contributions of source-critical scholars, our approach to the text will be in its final form, canonical and literary, believing with Bauer that our aim should be clarifying “weshalb der Text so dasteht, wie es dasteht” (U.F.W. Bauer, *Alle diese Worte: Impulse zur Schriftauslegung aus Amsterdam. Expliziert an der Schilfmeererzählung in Exodus 13, 17-14, 31* [Europäische Hochschulschriften 23/442; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991] 209). B.S. Childs correctly observes that the “final form of the story has an integrity of its own. It is not simply pieces of fragments put together, but it forms a meaningful composition which is different from the sum of its parts” (*The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster Press, 1974] 227).

Defining Cosmic Mountain Ideology – Beginning with a definition of terms, the cosmic mountain concept involves, broadly, the following interrelated ideas: the mountain is sacred, the dwelling place of the gods, the intersection between heaven and earth, the central and highest place of the world (*axis mundi*), and the foundation and navel of creation (*omphalos*). We use “ideology” to refer to a comprehensive vision or complex of ideas (whether doctrine, myth, etc.) that functions paradigmatically within a culture, informing its political and/or religious institutions.² Thus, cosmic mountain ideology particularly refers to the complex of ideas surrounding the cosmic mountain that paradigmatically informs political and/or religious institutions. Because of the interrelated ideas involved with the cosmic mountain (again, its being sacred, the dwelling place of the gods, etc.), mountains often became the sites of temples. Mountains, that is, became the stage for cultic rituals, temples themselves being architectural embodiments of the cosmic mountain, exemplified most obviously by the ziggurat structure.³ While the cosmic mountain idea is found throughout the ancient Near East, it would however be a fundamental error to assume a flat homogeneity regarding the cosmic mountain concept across

Similarly, M. Greenberg observed that to understand a book “means, then, understanding its message through grasping the coherence of its elements” (*Understanding Exodus* [New York: Behrman House, 1969] 1).

² J.M. Lundquist’s description of “a common ritual language and praxis centered around great temples, a common ‘temple ideology,’ which transcended language and cultural and political boundaries and which survived the rise and fall of empires” (“The Common Temple Ideology of the Ancient Near East” pp 53-76 in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, T.G. Madsen, ed. [Provo: BYU, 1984] 53) comes near our use as does F.H. Gorman’s discussion of conceptual worldview (*The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* [JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990] 17ff), especially as Gorman refers to “priestly creation theology” as ideology, the organizing conceptual framework of the priestly ritual system (39-42). Our use of ideology, further, is not intended as a polemic against historicity (cf. H.M. Barstad, *History and the Hebrew Bible: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography* [FAT 61; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008] 104-05 and fn 47, 48). See P.D. Miller’s discussion of ideology “Faith and Ideology in the Old Testament,” pp 629-47 in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) esp. 633-34. Cosmic mountain ideology should likely be seen as a subset of theology of the divine Presence, and as overlapping with temple theology. For temple theology, see M. Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004).

³ Cf. H. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1954) 6. M. Sternberg (*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987]) comes closest to defining what he means by ideology when he writes that it would “above all establish a world view” (44), and with this we agree in relation to its function within literature.

ANE⁴ cultures, and particularly across the divide between ancient Israel and the rest of the ANE kingdoms.⁵

Cosmology and Cosmogony – Cosmic mountain ideology may be conceived as encompassing a particular cosmology at its core,⁶ a world-mountain surrounded by the primeval waters. In point of fact, the cosmic mountain, with its paradisiacal summit reaching into the divine abode “so that a mortal can aspire to ascend to heaven,”⁷ and surrounded by the waters of chaos from which it arose and underneath which lie the depths of *Sheol*, is more accurately comprehended as based upon a cosmogony. Considered the *omphalos*, the mountain’s sacral nature is bound up with the lore of its being the first to rise out of the chaos waters during creation. Cosmic mountain ideology, then, is shaped by a cosmogonic paradigm, involving a participation in this primordial *event* of creation so that it also includes sacred time as well as sacred space (archetypal geography). As such, it is more of a mythopoeic⁸ concept, speaking “impressionistically about

⁴ “ANE” will be used in place of the adjectival phrase: “ancient Near Eastern.”

⁵ There is, to be sure, considerable overlap, but the need for nuance nevertheless remains, with differences between cultural ideas often being more significant than similarities. Cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 190-92. See also R.L. Cohn’s caution regarding the imposition of universal archetypes rather than depending upon a culture’s concrete historical experience for understanding its religion (*The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* [AAR Studies in Religion 23; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981] 4-5). S. Terrien, e.g., points to the link with/ memory of historical events as distinguishing Israel’s cultus from those of the surrounding cultures (*The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* [San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978] 20)

⁶ J.H. Walton’s point here is *apropos*: “a culture’s cosmic geography plays a significant role in shaping its worldview and offers explanations for the things we observe and experience” (*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006] 165). For sources on this subject see Walton’s fn 1 on 166. Cf. “Israelite cosmology” in W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol 2, trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 93-96.

⁷ B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg in Ugaritic Literature: Notes and Observations on Rš 24.245,” *ZAW* 86.1 (1974) 1-23 (16).

⁸ The term “mythopoeic” is utilized simply to defined Israel’s use of ancient Near Eastern mythological language as a helpful metaphor. Similarly, N. Sarna writes “it is highly significant that the biblical fragments of a cosmogonic myth have survived solely as picturesque metaphors exclusively in the language of poetry, something which strongly indicates a minimal impact upon the religious consciousness of Israel. Never once are these creatures accorded divine attributes, nor is there anywhere a suggestion that their struggle against God in any way challenged God’s sovereign rule in the universe. ...They practically always appear as a literary device expressing the evil deeds and punishment of the human wicked in terms of the mythical conflict of God with the rebellious forces of primeval chaos...God’s decisive overthrow of His mythical primeval enemies is invoked as an assurance of His mighty power for the redemption of Israel through a like victory over the present historical enemies of the nation” (*Understanding*

such matters rather than empirically,”⁹ and less of (what is sometimes construed as) a naïve or pre-scientific cosmological understanding.¹⁰

Cosmogonic/Cultic Pattern – Our thesis will develop a particular pattern in Scripture of going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship: the earth is delivered through the primal waters and Adam is brought to the Eden mount (Gen 1-3); Noah is delivered through the deluge waters and brought to the Ararat mount (Gen 6-9); Israel is delivered through the sea waters and brought to Sinai’s mount (Exod 14-24, etc.). Though not developed here, this significant pattern¹¹ may also be traced in Exod 2-3, where Moses, foreshadowing the exodus of Israel, is

Genesis, 22-23). Cf. also J.L. McKenzie, “A Note on Psalm 73 (74): 13-15,” *ThSt* 2 (1950) 281-82; B.K. Waltke, “The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-3, Part I: Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony,” *BibSac* 132 (1975) 34-35; G.B. Caird’s chapter “The Language of Myth,” *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980) 219-42; D. Tsumura’s chapter “Metaphor in Poetry,” pp. 182-95 in *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005); Dennis J. McCarthy, “‘Creation’ Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry,” pp. 74-89 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, B.W. Anderson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984); and especially B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” pp. 1-24 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, who discusses how understanding the mythopoeic dimensions of Scripture enhances our theological understanding; and M.K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1973): “[T]here are expressions which though appropriate to the sea, can now be understood as *translations* of mythological language...The biblical poets make free use of the ancient images without being bound by the structure of the myth” (104-05, emphasis original). Cf. also M. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 16-92; H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74.1 (1955) 9-21; B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 11-14 (NOTE: our use of “mythopoeic” is broad, incorporating what Batto distinguishes as “mythopoetic”); Th.Kr. Thordarson, “The Mythic Dimension: Hermeneutical Remarks on the Language of the Psalter,” *VT* 24.2 (1974) 212-20. It may be argued, however, that not only Israel but ANE religions in general “employed mythopoetic language to express the experience of the divine” (B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999]). Anderson references M. Eliade’s books *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954) and *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1961).

⁹ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain: Eden and its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity,” pp 187-224 in *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden*, G.A. Robbins, ed. (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 190. For the assimilation of mythopoeic imagery and language, cf. J.L. McKenzie, “A Note on Psalm 73 (74):13-15.”

¹⁰ See chapters 6 and 7 of G.K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) 161-218.

¹¹ While M.S. Smith has suggested a “pilgrimage pattern” is determinative for the literary structure of Exodus (*The Pilgrimage Pattern in Exodus* [JSOTSup 239; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997]) G. Davies, for a number of reasons (e.g., the journey account is portrayed more as a military campaign than a pilgrimage), calls Smith’s argument into question (“The Theology of Exodus,” pp 137-52 in *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*, E. Ball, ed. [JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 149-51). Davies, conceding that pilgrimage is a *motif* in the narrative, denies that it comprises a pattern (see his fn 28). If justified, going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship would

delivered through the waters of the Nile and brought to Mount Horeb;¹² in the cosmic journey portrayed in the Song of the Sea (Exod 15); and, more broadly, in the general ensuing history of Israel: brought through the waters of the Jordan River to Mount Zion/Jerusalem for worship (Solomon's temple).¹³ Furthermore, the *todah* psalms, often describing the individual's deliverance via the archetypal geography of being rescued from the death of *Sheol* and brought to the heights of the divine Presence at the temple, may also be said to conform to this pattern.¹⁴ Because this pattern constitutes cosmogonic mimesis (with, for example, the waters of the sea crossing in Exod 14 being poetically—and theologically—related to the cosmic waters of creation), this pattern will be seen to signify, among other things, a new creation.¹⁵ Fundamentally, this cosmic mountain pattern functions symbolically, or in a cultic manner, as an approach to the divine Presence,¹⁶ and should be understood, again, not as mere pre-scientific

prove such an organizing principle to constitute a pattern. A weakness in Smith's pattern, according to Davies, is that it terminates at Sinai, and our pattern may be said to do the same. However, this pattern in effect starts over with the trek to the Promise Land: through the waters of the Jordan River → to Mount Zion → for worship (Solomon's temple).

¹² While many years go by between the Nile deliverance and the removal of Moses' sandals before the burning bush, the actual narrative time is rather brief. For the distinction between narrative or discourse time and narrated time, cf. J.P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 35-37.

¹³ L. Thompson, *Introducing Biblical Literature: A More Fantastic Country* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978) 102, suggests the Sea and Jordan River crossings may literarily collapse the wilderness period so that, in a sense, Israel exits Egypt through the waters and enters Canaan.

¹⁴ Cf. H. Gunkel, *An Introduction to the Psalms* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1988) 199-221; G.A. Anderson, "The Praise of God as a Cultic Event," pp 15-33 in *Priesthood and Cult in Ancient Israel*, G.A. Anderson, S.M. Olyan, eds. (JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 28.

¹⁵ Because Scripture presents this pattern as a historical event, whose meaning is bound up with its providential mimesis of the primordial event, any canonically sensitive approach will interpret the exodus in light of creation rather than, or at least prior to, *vice versa*.

¹⁶ Thus, e.g., "Zion" represents God's Presence—see A. Robinson, "Zion and Zaphon in Psalm XLVIII 3," *VT* 24.1 (1974) 121. While not developed further in this thesis, the pattern accords well with V. Turner's phases for a rite of passage: (1) separation, (2) *limen*, and (3) reincorporation in new role. Cf. his *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldin, 1969) 94; A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960) 15-25.

cosmology, but rather via a vertical typology whereby an earthly mountain symbolizes the heavenly abode of the deity (cf. the תְּבִיטָה *tabnūt* of Exod 25.9).¹⁷

The Tabernacle/Temple Cultus of Israel – Because temples are the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, then it stands to reason that mountain narratives canonically preceding the tabernacle/temple may serve to foreshadow the cultus of Israel—if, indeed, it may be demonstrated the mountain in question is to be understood as “cosmic,” entailing an approach to the divine Presence. Now the relation of cultus to cosmic mountain may be seen in one of the great questions of Israel’s cult: “Who may ascend the mountain of YHWH?” (cf. Pss 15, 24). From one perspective, our thesis amounts to a biblical-theological reading of the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) narratives via the hermeneutical grid of this question. The expulsion and descent from (what we will argue is the cosmic mountain of) Eden in Gen 3 initiates the cultic question of who may now ascend into the divine Presence. The narrative arc from the beginning of Genesis comes, then, to a denouement with the close of Exodus: to dwell in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus presents something of a full-circle, albeit

¹⁷ R.E. Clements, e.g., writes: “the abode of a god could not be precisely defined and isolated, but it could be symbolized, and, as a result, the god could be effectively approached by men. The great attachment in the ancient world to sacred mountains, regarded as divine abodes, is probably to be explained in this way. The universe itself was thought of as a gigantic world-mountain, stretching from the entrance of the subterranean abyss to the highest point of heaven, and embracing all the inhabited world” (*God and Temple: The Presence of God in Israel’s Worship* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965] 2). However, and at least for ancient Israel, one need not presume that Mt. Sinai, e.g., was literally thought to be a world-mountain. Rather, and via vertical typology, “in the world of the cult, when the deity was revealed to men and women, ordinary space became sacred space, the meager water source of the city became a cosmic river, the little knoll of Jerusalem became Mount Zion, the highest mountain on earth, and the peripheral city of Jerusalem, the center of the world” (G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 193). For vertical typology, see R.M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Typos Structures* (AUSDDS 2; Berrien Springs: Andrews U Press, 1981) 352-58. For the correspondence between the Holy of holies and the heavenly throne of God, see M. Barker, *Temple Theology*, 16-21. See also Barker’s “The Veil as the Boundary,” pp 202-28 in *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T & T Clark, 2003); *idem.*, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008) 16f; G.K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008) 167-69. See also C. Fletcher-Louis who relates Dan 7.13’s (highly priestly) coming “with the clouds” to the Day of Atonement when the high priest enters God’s presence surrounded by clouds of incense: “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4.2 (2006) 155-75; *idem.*, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” *JSHJ* 5.1 (2007) 57-79; *idem.*, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case,” pp161-93 in *SBL 1997 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1997).

mediated, return to the original intent of Creation. Our main consideration in the prefiguring of the tabernacle cultus is thus in relation to its function as mediating the divine Presence.

Chapter Outline – In the following sections, we will consider (1) the cosmic mountain concept as found in ANE literature and in the Hebrew Bible; (2) the cosmic waters, again in ANE and biblical literature, with particular reference to the judicial river ordeal, and their function within the cosmology of the cosmic mountain; (3) the gate liturgy as a cultic ritual and its function within cosmic mountain ideology; (4) and the proposed scholarly contribution of our thesis topic.

I. THE COSMIC MOUNTAIN

The idea of the cosmic mountain,¹⁸ common within Semitic thought,¹⁹ is (according to Anderson) fundamental to “the ancient Israelite reading”²⁰ of biblical narrative. Cosmic mountain ideology was integral to the temple cults in the ancient Near East, including that of Israel.²¹ Indeed, cosmic mountain ideology “far from being an incidental aspect of worship at the temple of Jerusalem, constitutes in effect the determining factor which links together a number of its cultic practices and beliefs that otherwise appear to be unrelated.”²² Within this

¹⁸ Cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 9-97 for the cosmic mountain in the ancient Near East; pp. 98-181 for the cosmic mountain in the Old Testament; L.I.J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World: A Philological and Literary Study* (AnBib 39; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1970) 147-54; M.G. Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 40-48; B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 1-23 (esp. 16ff).

¹⁹ S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion,” *VT* 20.3 (1970) 315-338; J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” *JBL* 27.1 (1908) 24-47 (26, 28); G.H. Skipwith, “The Origins of the Religion of Israel (Concluding),” *JQR* 20.4 (1908) 738-76.

²⁰ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 190.

²¹ Cf. the section labeled “Sanctuary Ideology in the Ancient Near East” in J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on the Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (JSOTSup 395; London: T & T Clark, 2004) 141-44.

²² S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion,” 317. He uses “navel of the earth” which for all intents and purposes is equivalent to “cosmic mountain.” Terrien further states, 338: “The importance of the omphalos myth for Hebrew religion cannot [i.e., “should not”] be underestimated.”

cultic context, mythopoeic language amounts to symbolic speech reflecting spiritual reality.²³

Thus,

in the world of the cult, when the deity was revealed to men and women, ordinary space became sacred space, the meager water source of the city became a cosmic river, the little knoll of Jerusalem became Mount Zion, the highest mountain on earth, and the peripheral city of Jerusalem, the center of the world.²⁴

After considering the idea of the cosmic mountain within its general ANE context, we will

review cosmic mountain ideology within the biblical literature of ancient Israel.

A. Cosmic Mountain in the Ancient Near East

1. COSMIC MOUNTAIN CHARACTERISTICS

In his *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament*, R.J. Clifford explains how in the ancient Near East the union of heaven and earth was “conceived as a mountain whose base was the bottom of the earth and whose peak was the top of heaven,”²⁵ making it the *axis mundi* and the *omphalos* or center of the world.²⁶ He summarizes the characteristics of the cosmic mountain as being “the meeting place of the gods, the source of water and fertility, the battleground of conflicting natural forces, the meeting place of heaven and earth, the place where effective decrees are issued.”²⁷ One might also add that the *Urhügel* or “primal hill” was often

²³ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 193.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 11, quoting S.N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1961) 39. Cf. also B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 16ff.

²⁶ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 190.

²⁷ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 3. J.L. Carroll (“A Revised Temple Typology,” in *Hagion Temenos*, 2d ed. [Provo Ut: BYU Press, 2005]) summarizes and re-categorizes the works of John M. Lundquist on Temples, offering the following characteristics of “Temple Space”: (1) Sacred or Set Apart Space, (2) Revealed Plan, (3) Sacred Center, (4) House of the Deity, (5) Mountain, (6) Successive Ascension, (7) The Underworld, (8) Waters of Life, (9) Tree of Life, (10) Primordial Landscape, (11) Revelation, (12) Cosmic Orientation, (13) Cosmogram. Under “Temple Rites”: (14) Sacrifice, (15) Votive Offerings, (16) Yearly Festivals, (17) Pilgrimage, (18) Communal Meals, (19) Creation, (20) Sacred Marriage and Fertility, (21) Divination, (22) Initiation, (23) Secrecy. Under “The Temple and Community”: (24) Economic Center, (25) Source of Prosperity, (26) Place of Law, (27) Legitimizes the State, (28) Unifying Institution. See also A. Wiercinski’s delineation, “Pyramids and Ziggurats as the Architectonic Representations of the Archetype of the Cosmic Mountain,” *Katunob* 10 (1977) 71-72; and E. Eisenberg’s more “popular” presentation in *The Ecology of Eden* (New York: Knopf, 1998) 72-85, 90-131.

thought of as the place where creation occurred,²⁸ a notion that will resonate with the narrative of Genesis 2. Clifford's work surveys the cosmic mountain in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Hurrians and Hittites, before focusing in on the literature of Canaan and Israel. Widespread throughout the ancient Near East, relevant parallels to the biblical cosmic mount are found, for instance, in the literature of Ugarit:

The Canaanite god, Baal, for example appears in the Ugaritic texts as the inhabitant of the mountain *špn*, the same word as "Zaphon" in the Bible, which came to be an epithet of Mount Zion. In one Ugaritic text that Clifford translates, we hear some other characteristic epithets of Baal's mountain:

Come, and I will seek it,
In the midst of my mountain, divine Zaphon,
In the holy place, the mountain of my heritage,
In the chosen spot, on the hill of my victory.

...This mountain is apparently the source of a river whose significance, at least to judge by biblical parallels, is also cosmic and supernatural:

Then they set face
Toward El at the sources of the Two Rivers,
In the midst of the pools of the Double Deep.²⁹

2. FROM MOUNTAIN TO TEMPLE

Ultimately, the association between the cosmic mountain and the temple is found in their being divine dwelling-places. The attraction in the ancient world to sacred mountains, R.E. Clements suggests, was likely due to their being regarded as divine abodes:

The universe itself was thought of as a gigantic world-mountain, stretching from the entrance of the subterranean abyss to the highest point of heaven, and embracing all the inhabited world....The local sacred mountain was therefore the symbol, or representation, of the cosmos which formed the true abode of the deity whom men worshipped. It was thus the part which represented the whole.³⁰

²⁸ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 25. The notion "that in primeval times the earth produced mankind there," as at the temple of Inanna in Nippur wherein, it was believed, flesh first "sprouted forth," also contributed to the mount's sacred character (14).

²⁹ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 112-13. Levenson compares some of the Ugaritic epithets ("hill of victory," "mountain of heritage," "El," etc.) with the biblical tradition: cf. Ex 15.17; Ps 48.1-2; Ps 89.27; Gen 33.20; Ps 82. See also R.J. Clifford, "The Temple and the Holy Mountain," pp 107-24 in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, T.G. Madsen, ed. (RMS 9; Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984) 110ff.

³⁰ R.E. Clements, *God and Temple*, 2-3. Cf. J.A. Montgomery, "The Holy City and Gehenna," 28. The distinctly sacred character of cosmic mountains was also tied to their being regarded as divine abodes.

One may posit, then, and as Clements goes on to explain, a natural transition from sacred mountains to ziggurats:

If this interpretation of the attachment to sacred mountains may be regarded as valid, it must certainly also be applied to the great Ziggurats, or stage-towers, of Sumeria. These were an attempt on the part of men to build artificial mountains which could then serve as divine dwelling-places. They formed a transition stage between the veneration of real mountains as divine abodes, and the building of man-made temples. The great temple of Marduk in Babylon was an example of this kind of stage-tower construction, and shows how the Babylonian culture had inherited much from the earlier Sumerians.³¹

Jastrow Jr. similarly suggested ziggurats were introduced into the Euphrates Valley by people coming from a mountainous region who, led by natural impulse, reproduced a mountain in miniature to symbolize their old manner of worship.³² Whatever the genetic process may have been (mountain → ziggurat → isolated temple?), the association of temple and mountain was common in the ancient Near East and around the world.³³ This is to be expected in as much as one “might almost formulate a law that in the ancient East contemporary cosmological doctrine is registered in the structure and theory of the temples.”³⁴ Fundamentally, according to Lundquist’s first proposition regarding the comparative study of temples, the “temple is the

³¹ *Ibid.* Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 113; A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 71-87; S. Paas, “‘He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven...’ (Amos 9.6a),” *UF* 25 (1993) 319-25; W.F. Albright, “The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering,” *JBL* 39.3/4 (1920) 141-42; N-E. Andreasen, “The Heavenly Sanctuary in the Old Testament,” pp 63-79 in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, F.B. Holbrook, ed. (Silver Spring, MD: BSI, 1989) 64. As an example of the ubiquitous nature of the cosmic mountain idea, not only across cultures but ages, the Aztec ziggurat, Pyramid of the Sun, considered the heart of Teotihuacan (“city of the gods”), possesses a grand staircase signifying this man-made mountain was meant to be ascended so that sacrifices might be offered upon its apex, the counterpart to the mountain-summit abode of the gods (Dr. John R. Hale of University of Louisville, based on his study of sacred architecture worldwide, affirmed this interpretation in personal communication dated 21 January 2011).

³² M. Jastrow Jr., “Sumerian and Akkadian Views of Beginnings,” *JAOS* 36 (1917) 289. Cf. E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religions,” pp 43-70 in *The Labyrinth*, S.H. Hooke, ed. (London: SPCK, 1935) 45-46.

³³ Cf. M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. W.R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, 1959) 36-47; O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113-20; S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 88-89; N. Frye, *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of the Bible and Literature* (San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1990) 144-87. Frye (51) rightly identifies Dante’s *Commedia* as the great exemplar of the cosmic mountain in Christian literature, with its seven-spiraled mount of purgation serving as a link between heaven and earth. He does not mention, however, the salient feature that at the top of the mount, Dante portrays the Garden of Eden. Cf. also B. Margulis (“Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 17) who notes that in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* a garden of paradise is located on a Weltberg.

³⁴ E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 45.

architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.”³⁵ Wiercinski’s study also affirms that pyramids and ziggurats were architectonic representations of the archetype of the cosmic mountain, often decorated with portrayals of the cosmic waters and fertile trees, etc.³⁶ The assimilation of temples to cosmic mountains is related to their function as links between earth and heaven (i.e., the *axis mundi*), as attested by the names of Babylonian sanctuaries (“Mountain of the House,” “House of the Mountain of all Lands,” “Link between Heaven and Earth,” etc.) so that the ziggurat was literally a cosmic mountain.³⁷ Keel, who notes that ziggurat, like “step-tower,” can mean “mountain top,” also writes:

Almost all the great Egyptian sanctuaries claimed to house within their courts the primeval hill, the ‘glorious hill of the primordial beginning,’ which had first emerged from the floods of Chaos... The pyramids represent huge primeval hills... In Mesopotamia, as in Egypt, every temple has its *du-ku*, its “pure hill.” ...In the Ugaritic sphere, the conquest of Chaos is also closely related to mountain (hill) and temple. ...The hill Zion is identified with the primeval hill, paradise, the cosmic mountain and mountain of the gods.³⁸

Because of their assimilation, the terminology of the cosmic mountain could be applied to the temple, and *vice versa*. In Israelite and Canaanite thought, for example, the temple “was a spot of rest (*menuḥāh*), an inheritance (*naḥalāh*), and a spot where life was truly available.”³⁹ This

³⁵ J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” pp 205-219 in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, A.R.W. Green, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 207. “This perception,” Lundquist further notes, “is very common in the OT, as is well known and is seen in such passages as Isa 2.2 and Ps 48.2” (207).

³⁶ A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 69-113 plus tables. Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113-18; G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and Its Implications for a Biblical Theology of the Temple,” pp 191-209 in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, S. Gathercole, T. D. Alexander, eds. (Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 2004) 195.

³⁷ M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 40. Cf. *Idem.*, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. R. Sheed (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1958) 374-385; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 21ff; O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113; J.H. Walton, “The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications,” *BBR* 5 (1995) 155-75; J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 28; A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 9-113 (esp. 83). N. Frye (*Words with Power*, 152-53) similarly notes: “In Mesopotamian cities the temple to the god of the city would normally be in the center and would be the highest building: it would therefore be, symbolically, the connecting link between the earth we live on and the world of the gods, which is usually assumed to be in the sky, or above the sky. In Mesopotamia such temples usually took the form of what is known as the ziggurat, a building of several stories, with each story recessed from the one below it.”

³⁸ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113-18. Cf. J. Baines, “Temple Symbolism,” *RAIN* 15 (1976) 10-15 (esp. 10-11); J.M. Plumley, “The Cosmology of Ancient Egypt,” pp 17-41 in *Ancient Cosmologies*, 28-29.

³⁹ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 206-07. He also states that the “idea that Eden is a place of rest and an inheritance of life is grounded in the biblical identification of Eden as a cosmic mountain” (206).

shared terminology, however, reveals a more profound correspondence: the temple cultus, as explained by its literature and experienced through its rituals, was the way to enter into the reality signified by the cosmic mountain.⁴⁰ Temples *were* cosmology, the bonds of heaven, earth, and the netherworld, and the gateways to them; thus temple rituals, to a large extent, *were* cosmogony.⁴¹

3. VERTICAL TYPOLOGY

Understanding the correspondence between the temple cultus and the reality signified, furthermore, requires a grasp of what has been termed “vertical typology.”⁴² Vertical typology refers to the notion that a temple was an earthly replica of the heavenly divine abode. This understanding was a common feature of ANE sanctuary ideology.⁴³ Among the Canaanites, for example, the high god was thought to dwell in a temple (or tent) on the sacred mountain, the earthly temple of the deity being considered a copy of the heavenly temple on the mountain.⁴⁴ The temple of Baal at Ras Shamra, replicating the mythical abode of Mount Zaphon, even paralleled the latter with a window in the roof.⁴⁵ Similar traces of such a typology have been detected in Egyptian and Sumerian temples as well,⁴⁶ Egyptian shrines utilizing expressions such

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 192: “Every temple was a cosmic mountain, even those located in the most unrealistic settings, the Phoenician littoral. For our purposes, it is important to note that cosmic mountain imagery was not a purely literary phenomenon. This mythic *topos* was actualized all over the ancient Canaanite world in the cultus of the local temple.”

⁴¹ See the examples, including biblical, by E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 46-59.

⁴² See R.M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture*, 352-58. Cf. M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 16f; N-E. Andreasen, “The Heavenly Sanctuary in the Old Testament,” 66-68.

⁴³ J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 142. Cf. E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 60-66.

⁴⁴ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 177. Cf. also L.R. Fisher, “The Temple Quarter,” *JSS* 8.1 (1963) 34-41 (40); G.K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy*, 167-75.

⁴⁵ R.J. Clifford, “The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting,” *CBQ* 33 (1971) 225; J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 142.

⁴⁶ Cf. H.H. Nelson, L. Oppenheim, G.E. Wright, “The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East,” *BA* 7 (1944) 41-77. J.L. McKenzie notes: “Both in Mesopotamia and in Egypt the temple was a symbol of celestial reality; in Egypt the temple symbolized the world in which the god reigned, and in Mesopotamia the temple was the earthly counterpart of the heavenly temple” (*A Theology of the Old Testament* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1974] 51).

as '3 wy pt ("doors of heaven").⁴⁷ As with the cosmic mountain itself, temples replicated the world in its tripartite form (heaven, earth, and sea), so that gaining access to the inner sanctum where the god's statue was located was like gaining access to heaven itself.⁴⁸

Vertical typology, the idea that temples on earth had their counterparts in heaven, thus corresponding to heavenly archetypes, was common in the ancient Near East, and, as we will have occasion to observe below, is supported in the biblical literature as well.⁴⁹ In the *Wisdom of Solomon* (first century B.C.), the vertical typology is manifest as the king declares (9.8):

You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain,
and an altar in the city of your habitation,
a copy of the holy tent which you did prepare from the beginning.

B. Cosmic Mountain in Ancient Israel

For Israel as well, from "her earliest period as a people, around Sinai, through the time of her settled life, around Zion, sacred mountains played a significant role in Israel's religious life,"⁵⁰

⁴⁷ J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 142. Cf. also R.J. Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 27; F.M. Cross Jr and D.N. Freedman, "The Song of Miriam," *JNES* 14 (1955) 237-50; T.N.D. Mettinger, "YHWH Sabaoth—the Heavenly King on the Cherubim Throne," pp 109-38 in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays: Papers Read at the International Symposium for Biblical Studies, Tokyo, 5-7 December, 1979*, T. Ishida, ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1982); O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 172.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁴⁹ M. Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira," pp. 63-79 in *Sacred Places and Profane Places: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, J. Scott and P. Simpson-Housley, eds. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) 68; J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 142. Cf. M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 16f.

⁵⁰ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 98. R.L. Cohn similarly writes: "The movement from Sinai to Zion neatly encapsulates geographically the flow of biblical sacred history from the Pentateuch through the Prophets" (*The Shape of Sacred Space*, 3). NOTE: For the religion of the patriarchs within the context of sanctuary/mountain, cf. G.K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse," who notes that "the restatement of [Adam's] commission to Israel's patriarchs results in the following: (i) God appearing to them (except in Gen 12.8; 13.3-4); (ii) they 'pitch a tent' (literally a 'tabernacle' in LXX); (iii) on a mountain; (iv) they build 'altars' and worship God (i.e. 'calling on the name of the LORD,' which probably included sacrificial offerings and prayer) at the place of resettlement; (v) the place where these activities occur is often located at 'Bethel'—the 'House of God' (the only case of altar building not containing these elements nor linked to the Genesis 1 commission is Gen 33.20). ...The building of these worship sites on a mountain may represent part of a pattern finding its climax in Israel's later Temple that was built on Mount Zion (the traditional site of Mount Moriah), which itself becomes a synecdoche of the whole for the part in referring to the Temple" (202, 203 fn 50). Cf. also ch 3 of Beal's *Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT; Downers Grove: IVP, 2004); J.A. Montgomery, "The Holy City and Gehenna"; S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion"; and S. Paas's article, "He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven," for the relation of the primeval mound to both the temple and the throne/enthronement.

most theophanies taking place upon mountains (Horeb, Sinai, Gen 22, etc.).⁵¹ Indeed, arguably the oldest appellation for Israel's God is *El Shaddai* (אֱלֹהֵי שַׁדַּי *el šadday*), widely held to mean "El, the One of the mountain," "God of the mountain,"⁵² or "Mountain-dweller"⁵³—with YHWH himself declaring (1 Kgs 20.28): "It is YHWH who is God of the mountains" (אֱלֹהֵי הָהָרִים יְהוָה), and (Isaiah 2.2): "the mountain of YHWH's house (הַר בֵּית־יְהוָה) will be established as the head of the mountains, exalted above the hills." The word "rock" (צוּר *šûr*), sometimes a synonym for mountain, is also an epithet for YHWH (2 Sam 22.47; Ps 18.3).⁵⁴ The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to be sure, is *El Shaddai* (cf. the parallelism in Gen 49.24-25; Ex 3.6).⁵⁵

Regarding now the sacred mount(s) with which Israel's God is associated, G.A.

Anderson lists two particularly Semitic characteristics: (1) the mountain was a refuge and place of protection from the powers of chaos, and (2) the mountain was the source of the world's

⁵¹ M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (UBL 8; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 380.

⁵² Assuming *Shaddai* derives from the Akkadian *šadû* ("mountain"). See W.F. Albright, "The Names Shaddai and Abram," *JBL* 54.4 (1935) 173-204 (based on this article E. Jacob [*Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958) 46] considers El Shaddai's meaning "God of the mountain" as "established"); L.R. Bailey, "Israelite 'El Saddy and Amorite Bel Sade," *JBL* 87.4 (1968) 434-38; T.N.D. Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) 69-72; F.M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1973) 52-60. Cf. also the proverb of Gen 22.14 (compare with Ps 121) which may be translated as "Yahweh appears in the mountain" (G.H. Skipwith, "The God of Sinai and Jerusalem," *JQR* 17.3 [1905] 489-512 [502-3]). Similarly, the Mesopotamian god Enlil, one of the highest in the Sumerian pantheon, means "Great Mountain" (A. Wiercinski, "Pyramids and Ziggurats," 84), and the Sumerian home of the pantheon was Ekur, "House of the mountain," (G.H. Skipwith, "The Origins of the Religion of Israel," 739).

⁵³ M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 376, 380, 581-82, following J.C. de Moor (*The Rise of Yahwism: Roots of Israelite Monotheism*, 2nd ed. [Leuven: Peeters, 1997] 179-80, 246) who says "Mountain-dweller" is the most natural explanation for the epithet.

⁵⁴ R.L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 29-30; E.D. van Buren, "Mountain Gods," *Orientalia*, NS 12 (1943) 76; W.F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan: A Historical Analysis of Two Contrasting Faiths* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968) 188; F.M. Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *HTR* 55 (1962) 247; M.P. Knowles, "'The Rock, His Work is Perfect': Unusual Imagery for God in Deuteronomy XXXII," *VT* 39.3 (1989) 307-22; D.T. Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 140.

⁵⁵ L.R. Bailey, "Israelite 'El Saddy and Amorite Bel Sade," 434. Mettinger shows the prominence of El Shaddai in the patriarchal period, occurring 9 times in the Pentateuch and 31 times in Job (of the total 44 times in the OT) (*In Search of God*, 69).

fertilizing rivers.⁵⁶ Certainly evident in the biblical literature, the uniqueness of these characteristics as such is questionable. While the Canaanite El's abode is also the source of two rivers,⁵⁷ the former feature finds correspondence with the primal hill of Egyptian mythology, having arisen out of the chaos waters. Rather, the uniqueness of ancient Israel's cosmic mountain ideology is bound up with the uniqueness of Israel's God—his nature and attributes, his torah, and the cultus he establishes in order to be approached by his people.⁵⁸ We now turn to consider briefly the three most important cosmic mountains in the Hebrew Bible: Eden, Sinai, and Zion.⁵⁹

1. EDEN AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Beyond both the ANE context and the prominence of mountains in biblical literature (oft with creation symbolism), that the paradise of Eden was located atop a mountain may be inferred from the text itself, in the depiction of the river in Genesis 2.10-14 flowing out from Eden's garden and branching out into four headwaters to fructify the entire earth.⁶⁰ This interpretation is explicit in Ezekiel 28.13-14 where the phrase "You were in Eden, the garden of God"

⁵⁶ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 190-91. He also mentions the cosmic mountain's "role in cultic feasting. The cosmic mountain and its temple were the most important sites in Canaanite mythology for divine feasting. In Israelite religion, the temple in Jerusalem was the site of Israel's great festal meals. It was in the context of these festivals that individual Israelites were able to experience the nearness and availability of God. To be sure, the temple of Jerusalem was thought to be the *Axis Mundi*, that is the location wherein heaven and earth (and even the underworld) met. But the nearness of the divine realm could not be experienced simply by standing in the temple confines. This nearness or availability of God was concretized within the context of the sacred meal. It was during the feasts at the temple that one could truly 'live'" (193-94).

⁵⁷ Indeed, one of the general characteristics of the cosmic mountain in the ancient Near East listed by Clifford is its being "the source of water and fertility" (*The Cosmic Mountain*, 3).

⁵⁸ While it is proper to contextualize Israel's cultus within the overall ANE background, M. Barker rightly cautions that this may "lead to foreign ideas being used as the *basis* for studying the [Israelite] temple, rather than as an interesting sidelight upon it" (*The Gate of Heaven*, 3; emphasis original).

⁵⁹ So G.A. Anderson delineates them ("The Cosmic Mountain," 192). NOTE: While not as prominent as Eden, Sinai, and Zion, the Ararat mount is depicted in the biblical literature, and understood in extra-biblical literature, as a cosmic mountain—a point also affirmed, as will be noted in our chapter on the deluge, by G.A. Anderson.

⁶⁰ B.K. Waltke, with C.J. Fredericks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 86. Waltke elsewhere (*An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007] 256) states: "Inferentially Eden is a mountain, and its garden is set atop this mountain... This heavenly water fructifies the temple-garden; after the garden is fed and nourished by the river of life, it serves as the

(בְּעֶרְבֵן גִּבְרָאֵלִים הָיִיתָ) is paralleled with “You were on the holy mountain of God”

(בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתָ),⁶¹ associating the concepts of the mount of God with Eden.⁶² Yet, because the paradisiacal images of Gen 2 are believed to derive from Mesopotamia, where the cosmic mountain motif does not appear to have been influential, Clifford argued the narrative does not fit the cosmic mountain model, claiming that Eden only becomes a cosmic mountain in the exilic period (expressed in Ezekiel).⁶³ This position, however, has been contested, first by Margulis who pointed out some of the inconsistencies in Clifford’s work regarding his opinion that there is no evidence for a cosmic mountain in Mesopotamia.⁶⁴ But even conceding both a Mesopotamian background to Gen 2 and insubstantial evidence for the cosmic mountain in this region, Levenson, followed by Anderson, rightly manifests the genetic fallacy of Clifford’s

conduit from which life-giving water pours to the ends of the earth.” Cf. also H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, trans. M.E. Biddle (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997) 36; E. Eisenberg, *The Ecology of Eden*, 90-1; J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 129. While E.A. Speiser (“The Rivers of Paradise,” pp 175-82 in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994]) argues for viewing the rivers as flowing upstream, cf. G. Wenham’s critique, *Genesis 1-15*, 66.

⁶¹ Cf. Isaiah 14.12-15; Rev 21.10; 22.1-2.

⁶² J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 27-28; G. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” *HTR* 82.2 (1989) 143; M.G. Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 43. J.D. Levenson (*Sinai and Zion*, 128-29. Cf. also, *idem.*, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976] 5-36) writes: “What is most revealing about Ezekiel’s oracle is that it makes an identification of “Eden, the garden of God” (Ezek 28.13) with “God’s holy mountain” (v 14). In Ezekiel (or his school), the vocabulary of the Temple mount, Zion, is common to the old story of the Garden of Eden. This becomes clear in the companion piece to the oracle against Tyre in 28.2-5. Here the riches of vv 4-5 are in parallel with the wondrous gems of vv 13-14. The prophet is in both instances making an analogy between the opulence of the port city, Tyre, and the fabulous wealth which is characteristic of both Eden and the mountain of the gods. In fact, the description of the solitary resident of Eden in 28.12, the king of Tyre, is taken from the description of Zion in older literature. He is the “seal of perfection” (*ḥôṭēm toknîṭ*), and Zion is “perfect in beauty” (*mīklal-yōpî*, Ps 50.2). The king is “flawless in beauty” (*k’lîl yōpî*), as is the Temple city (*k’lîlat yōpî*, Lam 2.15), and is the fame of Jerusalem, which, according to another oracle of Ezekiel’s, became widespread “because of your beauty, which was perfect” (*b’yopyēk kî kālîl hû’*, Ezek 16.14). The same language describes life in Eden, the Garden of Delight, and Zion, the Temple mount, in which the primal perfection of Eden is wonderfully preserved. The similarity between Zion as the garden of God and Eden in the same role appears very clearly in the description of the Garden of Eden in what is known as the “J” account of creation (see Gen 2.4b-14). V 12 speaks of precious stones in the vicinity of Eden, just as do Ezek 28.4-5 and 13-14 in connection with Eden or the mountain of God.” E.T. Mullen Jr (*The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* [HSN 24; Chico, Cal: Scholar’s Press, 1980] 151-54), as well, claims that “garden” and “mountain” are associated in both Gen 2-3 and in Ezekiel 28, as is the case in other Mesopotamian literature (*Enki and Ninhursag* and *Gilgamesh*).

⁶³ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 93-103.

⁶⁴ B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 19-23.

position and utilizes the presence of the Gihon in Gen 2 as evidence of an early link to the Jerusalem/Zion tradition.⁶⁵ Though the indications are subtle, Gen 2-3 does indeed appear to portray Eden as a cosmic mountain. Fishbane provides a useful summary of our position, elements of which will be developed further below:⁶⁶

A geography of primordial space is thus mapped out which serves to supplement Genesis 1.1-2.4a. The natural harmony and bounty of the created earth are symbolized by a garden in the center of creation, where two semimagical trees embody and preserve the deepest mysteries of creation: the mysteries of life and knowledge. The perfection of this primordial space is further symbolized by four streams which enrich the four quadrants of the earth. The prototype of this symbolic image is often found in ancient religious iconography: a navel releasing life-giving water to the four corners of creation, together with a world mountain is only indirectly suggested in Genesis 2.10-14, by its reference to the streams' downward flow. A later reflex of the Eden motif (Ezekiel 28.11-19) preserves this component more explicitly: The Garden is found on a "mountain of God" (v 14). It is undoubtedly on such a primal landscape, sustained by providential fertility, that man is placed in Genesis 2.15.

The temple symbolism⁶⁷ pervading the Eden narrative is thus consistent with the garden's cosmic mountain locale. Clifford notes, for example, that "Ezekiel 47.1-12, Zechariah 14.8, and Joel 4.18 (E. VV. 3.18) speak of fertilizing waters flowing (ys') from the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple is Mount Zion. Ezekiel 28 assumes the garden in Eden (v 13) is the holy mountain (vv 14, 16)."⁶⁸ Eden's flowing river itself (Gen 2.10-14), then, constitutes temple imagery, portraying paradise as a temple and *vice versa*, for the "identification of the temple in Jerusalem with Eden is as old as the Bible itself."⁶⁹ The imagery of Eden's cosmic mount is woven

⁶⁵ J.D. Levenson, *The Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48*, 28-30; G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 120 fn 19.

⁶⁶ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (Oxford: One World, 1998) 17. Most contemporary scholars, then, utilize Gen 2.10-14 and Ezek 28.13-14 to make this point. O. Keel (*The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 118) writes: "Paradise was thought to be located on a high mountain (cf. Ezek 28.13-16); it was densely forested (Gen 2.8-9) and the source of mighty rivers (Gen 2.10-14). The temple site, as locus of God's presence, was very closely related to paradise. In Mesopotamian creation myths, the foundation of the temple replaces the creation of paradise." Cf. J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis with the Christ of Eschatology* (Fearn, Ross-shire, GB: Mentor, 2007) 59.

⁶⁷ G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," pp 399-404 in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, Richard S. Hess and David T. Tsumura, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994). NOTE: Temple imagery in Gen 2-3 will be developed in the next chapter.

⁶⁸ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 100.

⁶⁹ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 203.

throughout the history of ancient Israel and can be traced within the Hebrew Bible.⁷⁰ Jacques Ellul, for example, notes that Israel's prophetic literature anchors eschatological hope in God's establishing anew the Edenic temple upon a great mountain.⁷¹

Early Jewish and Christian interpretations confirm a like understanding of Gen 2-3. In *Jubilees* "Eden is conceived of as a holy site...as a cosmic mountain which the flood waters were not able to overcome."⁷² So, too, for the writers of the early Syriac Christian documents, the *Cave of Treasures* and Ephraim's *Hymns on Paradise*, "Eden was the cosmic mountain *par excellence*."⁷³ Anderson also notes the "influences of Enoch and other post-biblical Jewish sources" toward interpreting the Garden of Eden narrative in terms of the cosmic mountain are unremarkable in as much as they were dependent on biblical precedents: "What was implicit in Gen 2-3 has become explicit in these texts."⁷⁴

Eden, then, may be considered an *archetype* for the cosmic mountain itself,⁷⁵ the foremost World Mountain for Israel.⁷⁶ Further, the Israelite cultus of the tabernacle/temple—and

⁷⁰ See M. Fishbane's "The 'Eden' Motif," pp 111-20 in *Biblical Text and Texture*.

⁷¹ J. Ellul, *The Meaning of the City*, trans. D. Pardee (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 189ff. Cf. W. Gage's discussion, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1994) 52-54.

⁷² G.A. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden?" 129.

⁷³ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 199 (emphasis original). Cf. 199-212 where Anderson demonstrates how these documents conceive of Eden as confining the mighty sea, being also a refuge from the floodwaters. Further, the true or "heavenly" Zion (versus political Jerusalem) is conceived in Ezekiel as Eden (cf. S. Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47:1-12 and Genesis 2:10-14," pp 171-89 in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, W.P. Brown, S.D. McBride, eds. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000]).

⁷⁴ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 189, 211.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 211 (emphasis added). Anderson further states that Eden "is both a luxuriant and festive location. It is this aspect of Eden that is picked up by the earliest biblical exegetes and is carried forth in Rabbinic and Christian literary works" (211).

⁷⁶ E. Eisenberg, "The Mountain of the Gods," *NENA* 8.1 (2001) 109-120 (116). M.G. Kline (*God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 47-48) writes: "Like its redemptive counterpart, Mount Zion, the mountain of Eden was to be the spiritual capital, the place to which from afar prayer would be directed, to whose summit the holy throng would ascend with their tribute of worship and praise (cf., e.g., Ps 43.3, 4; Isa 27.13; 30.29; 56.7). ... Viewed as a whole from top to bottom the mount of God in Eden was a representation of the cosmos—the foot of the mount, the earth; its summit, heaven. In terms of cosmographic symbolism the mountain was thus the heaven-earth axis, located at the center of the earth, just as Zion, its redemptive restoration, was regarded as the navel or center of the earth (Ezek 5.5; 38.12). ... As an ascending passageway the slopes of the mountain were a staircase. Architecturally this image was

specifically Sabbath day worship—opened the way to that Edenic reality: “...everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast my covenant—even them I will bring to my holy mountain...” (Isa 56.6-7).⁷⁷ Indeed, the tabernacle cultus as the ordained means of experiencing the divine Presence—the means of reversing humanity’s exile from paradise—seems to be the logic informing the various parallels between the creation/Eden and tabernacle narratives, a point to be developed throughout this thesis.

2. MOUNT SINAI AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

Mount Sinai, the mountain of torah, also stands in the Canaanite tradition of the cosmic mountain.⁷⁸ Most notably, the fiery Presence upon its summit (Exod 19.16-20; 20.18-21; 24.9-18), perhaps Israel’s ultimate experience of theophany,⁷⁹ establishes Sinai as a cosmic mountain. Even the conceptions of Zion as a holy mountain, it has been suggested, may be traced “ultimately to the inner-Israelite experience at what is probably *the* holy, cosmic mountain of religious literature, Sinai.”⁸⁰ As was the case with the Eden account, so too with the Sinai narrative, the literary goal appears to be rooted in the cultus. Indeed, the correlation between cosmic mountain and tabernacle/temple becomes especially manifest as the narrative in Exodus moves, like the theophanic cloud itself, from Sinai to the tabernacle. In our fourth chapter on the

embodied in the ziggurat, the symbolic cosmic mountain of the ancient pagan world, a mythologized version of the pristine Edenic reality.”

⁷⁷ Cf. C.J. Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2006) 91.

⁷⁸ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 4. The Canaanite cosmic mountain “Zaphon is the scene of frequent banqueting” (61) which is another line of similarity with Sinai (Ex 4.9-11). For the Sinai traditions, cf. 107-23; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in *By Study and Also By Faith*, Vol 1 in *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (Provo, Ut: BYU Press, 1990). Further, Lundquist’s eleventh proposition regarding temples states: “Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often as the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony” (“What is a Temple?” 215).

⁷⁹ Cf. S. Terrein, *The Elusive Presence: Towards a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978) 106ff.

⁸⁰ J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 207 (emphasis original). Lundquist writes that even the “temple of Solomon would seem ultimately to be little more than the architectural realization and the ritual enlargement of the Sinai experience” (207). The Presence of YHWH, to be sure, was the determining factor in regarding any locale as “holy.” As the divine Presence migrated from Sinai to Zion, so, too, the associated images.

sea crossing/Sinai account, we will examine further the cosmic mountain attributes of Sinai, including parallels with the tabernacle/temple cultus.

3. MOUNT ZION AS COSMIC MOUNTAIN

By its many mythic attributions in both the Psalms and in the prophetic literature, Zion is perhaps the mountain most obviously cosmic in the religion of Israel,⁸¹ the bond and gateway of both heaven and the underworld.⁸² The mountain is depicted as primordial, “situated at the center of the world” so that “from it, everything else takes its bearings”⁸³ (Ps 48):

Great is YHWH, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God,
On his holy mountain.
Beautiful in elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion on the sides of the North (יִצְחָן *sāpôn*),
The city of the great King.⁸⁴

Rabbinic literature, such as the Talmudic tractate *Yoma*, presents Mount Zion as the point from which creation proceeded, the place having a genuinely primordial character in our world.⁸⁵

Within the Hebrew Bible itself, further, it appears that Zion fell heir to the legacy of Mount Sinai, becoming *the* mountain of Israel.⁸⁶ The transfer of theophany language from the traditions

⁸¹ See, e.g., N.W. Porteous, “Jerusalem-Zion: The Growth of a Symbol,” pp 235-252 in *Verbannung und Heimkehr: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie Israels im 6. und 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr.: Wilhelm Rudolph zum 70. Geburtstag*, A. Kuschke, ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1961); B.S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (SBT 27; London: SCM Press, 1960) 84-93.

⁸² E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 53-59.

⁸³ J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *JR* 64.3 (Jul 1984) 282-83; *idem.*, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48*, 5-19; *idem.*, *Sinai and Zion*, 115, where Levenson calls this feature “the most important” attribute; M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 36-47.

⁸⁴ Cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 141: “In the Hebrew Bible, Zion occurs mostly as the name of Jerusalem *qua* religious center. In some uses, however, Zion is no mere geographical designation but bears a meaning enriched by mythical motifs.”

⁸⁵ J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 283.

⁸⁶ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 187 (emphasis original). Referencing Psalm 50, Levenson also states: “The Zion material in vv 1-3 thus serves to highlight the cosmic implications of Sinai” (208). Cf. R.L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 38. As does Levenson, Cohn also points out that although both Sinai and Zion “are conceived as ‘sacred mountains,’ they function symbolically in different ways. Mount Sinai, the source of Torah, and Mount Zion, the site of the once and future temple, represent the alpha and omega of biblical sacred geography” (43). However, both mounts, Sinai and Zion, are associated with covenants (cf. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 206-17), a

of Sinai to the Jerusalem cultus of Zion in the Psalms was utilized “to impress upon the worshipper that the God of Sinai reveals himself anew on Mount Zion. Israel in the Temple liturgy relives the primal experience of Yahweh at Mount Sinai....affirm[ing] the identity of the God of Mount Sinai and the Law with the God of Zion.”⁸⁷

The Presence of God, who via the tabernacle migrated with his people from Sinai to his abode atop Zion, is the ultimate source of the mountain’s sacral nature: “Yahweh answers from his holy hill (Ps 3.5; cf. Amos 1.2), for that is the sacred mount upon which Yahweh’s temple is established (Ps 87.1-3) and the cosmic abode of God localized in Zion for the blessing of his people (Ps 48.1-3).”⁸⁸ Commenting on Psalm 74, B.W. Anderson writes: “The center, or omphalos, of the earth (v 12) refers to Mount Zion (v 2b), where the divine King is sacramentally present (‘tabernacles’).”⁸⁹ So, too, Paas:

In the centre of the earth (where Israel in keeping with ancient Eastern custom situated herself) is found the holy mount Zion, against which the chaotic waters of the primal sea stormed futilely. On this mountain stands YHWH’s temple, in which He Himself is enthroned and maintains the order of creation.⁹⁰

Expectedly, then, the temple shares in the mount’s traits, and is, as Levenson notes, the visible, tangible token of the act of creation, the point of the world’s origin, and the focus of the universe.⁹¹ The temple of Solomon likely conveyed to its visitors a typological garden of Eden, the molten sea symbolizing the subdued waters of chaos issuing forth, and the twin pillars

feature which may have implications for a creational covenant regarding the Edenic mount. Cf. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Texts and Texture*, 114-15.

⁸⁷ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 154, 155. He compares Deuteronomy 33.2 with Psalm 50, noting the similar usage of “He shone forth (*hōpî*),” for both Sinai and Zion.

⁸⁸ N.C. Habel, “‘Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth’: A Study in Tradition Criticism,” *JBL* 91.3 (1972) 328-29. Cf. also P.D. Miller, Jr., “El, The Creator of Earth,” *BASOR* 239 (1980) 43-46; S.I. Feigin, “The Origin of *Eloh*, ‘God,’ in Hebrew,” *JNES* 3.4 (Oct 1944) 259.

⁸⁹ B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” 9. This “Presence,” linked to Sabbath enthronement, suggests the idea, developed throughout Scripture, of worship as approaching God upon his mount (cf. Gen 8.20-1; Ex 3.1-5; 24; Heb 12.12-29; etc.).

⁹⁰ S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 82.

⁹¹ J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 282-83. Cf. E. Bloch-Smith, “‘Who is this King of Glory?’ Solomon’s Temple and Its Symbolism,” pp 18-31 in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, Coogan, Exum, Stager, eds. (Louisville: WJK, 1994).

modeling the trees of life and knowledge.⁹² G.E. Wright brings out some of the cosmic dimensions of Solomon's temple on Mount Zion:

The large bronze "sea" closely resembles the Babylonian *apsu*, a word used both as the name for the subterranean fresh-water ocean from which all life and fertility were derived, and also as the name of a basin of holy water in the temples. The great altar for burnt offerings was built in stages like a Babylonian temple-tower, and the lowest stage or foundation of both was named "bosom of the earth." The uppermost stage of the altar was crowned with four horns at the corners (as were Babylonian temple-towers) and was named *har 'el*, explained most convincingly by Albright as meaning "mountain of God," and to be compared with the meaning of the Babylonian word for temple-tower (*zigguratu*), which meant "mountain peak." Old Sumerian names of temple-towers in Babylonia often designated them as cosmic mountains. This and other evidence indicates that the Temple and its paraphernalia were rich in cosmic symbolism, just as were Babylonian and presumably Canaanite temple installations. It is clear, therefore, that Solomon's Temple was to be the abode of the Lord in the sense that it was the earthly representation of the heavenly abode....⁹³

The tabernacle/temple cultus, in common with the general sanctuary ideology of the ancient Near East, participated in vertical typology: the tripartite architectural structure related the inner sanctum of the holy of holies to the heavenly sphere (corresponding to the summit of the sacred mountain), so that worship was, to some degree, a participation in the uninterrupted worship of heaven.⁹⁴

This cosmic "parallelism" between mountain and temple underscores once more a critical point: far from being a mere literary image, the cosmic mountain comprises an ideology that is reflected in historical Israel in the cultus of the temple.⁹⁵ In summary:

The cosmic mountain imagery is widespread in the Hebrew Bible. This mountain is not only the *Axis Mundi* and the *Omphalos* or navel of the world, but it is also a place of refuge, the source of fertilizing rivers and a

⁹² E. Bloch-Smith, "Who is this King of Glory?" 27.

⁹³ G.E. Wright, "The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East," *BA* 7.4 (1944) 74-75. Cf. R.E. Clements (*God and Temple*, 65, 67) who notes: "The furnishings of the temple were full of cosmic symbolism, as was in effect true also for the temple as a whole. The very conception of such a building was founded on the belief that a correspondence existed between the earthly and the heavenly worlds. Yahweh's house in Jerusalem was intended to be a copy, or symbol, of the cosmic 'house' where he had his abode....The underlying idea was that the temple was a microcosm of the macrocosm, so that the building gave visual expression to the belief in Yahweh's dominion over the world and all natural forces." M. Fishbane, too, notes the emphasis of Ezekiel upon the altar of the new Temple, the base being described as *heq ha'aretz*, "the bosom of the earth," and its summit, crowned with four horns, as *har 'el*, "the mountain of God," so that the altar is not only the sacred center of the Temple but the *axis mundi* (*Biblical Text and Texture*, 118).

⁹⁴ J. Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995) 113; *idem.*, "The Structure of P," *CBQ* 38 (1976) 286.

⁹⁵ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 191. See also M. Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel," 66.

very holy spot. The two most important cosmic mountains in the Bible are Zion and Sinai, but to the degree that Zion is equated with Eden, Eden also becomes a cosmic mountain... [Eden] is a spot where life itself, that is life with the deity, is offered. But like much mythic thought, its luxuriance is not unmotivated, nor purely literary in origin. Eden, as a luxuriant cosmic mountain becomes the archetype or symbol for the earthly temple. Its fertile streams and life giving viands are not limited to a mythic pre-history. Rather they can be experienced partially and proleptically in the regular cycle of worship at the temple. ...The mountain of Eden was also a holy spot. Because of this, access to its inner sanctum—the location of the tree of life—was carefully guarded. This mountain was divided into zones of holiness, just as Mount Sinai was. Only those of highest spiritual development could reside in its center. Others could derive its benefits only from a distance. The holiness of Eden becomes a very important factor in the interpretation of the Bible. Eden, as cosmic mountain, becomes a hermeneutical tool. It allows these [Syriac Christian] writers to organize the disparate narrative material of the Bible into a meaningful theological unit. On the largest possible scale, that of the entire Bible, Eden is both the image of the ideal first time, and the eschatological goal of the end-time. In between these points, exists [sic] the cultic institutions of temple and church.⁹⁶

II. THE COSMIC WATERS

The relationship of the primordial waters to the cosmic mountain will now be explored. Previous studies on the cosmic mountain have not dealt adequately with the whole cosmological complex, including the cosmic waters, as we hope to do by manifesting the repeated biblical pattern of going through the waters to the mountain of God. There have been, to be sure, independent studies on the cosmic waters and the river ordeal with notable contributions by H.G. May, T.S. Frymer-Kensky, and P.K. McCarter,⁹⁷ studies to be synthesized here into a more complete cosmological framework.

Beginning first with the ancient Near East in general, then moving to ancient Israel in particular, we will consider the relation of the waters to the mountain, deductively, through the

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 198-99, 202. Anderson also makes the important point: "But the description of Eden as a cosmic mountain is more than simply a vestigial survival of an archaic Israelite idea. This motif allowed both Ephraim and the author of the *Cave of Treasures* to *organize the theological content of their Christian Bible*. The use of this motif as a hermeneutical device for integrating the message of scripture is an important witness to the value of [the mythopoeic themes] in the Bible itself. Curiously, modern commentators have not appreciated the *theological* value of these [mythopoeic themes]. Perhaps the study of early exegesis is not without value for the modern biblical scholar" (212, emphasis original). As such, cosmic mountain ideology was an original source and center for the project of biblical theology.

⁹⁷ H.G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, 'Many Waters,'" 9-21; T.S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, vols. 1, 2 (Unpublished PhD dissertation; Yale University, 1977); P.K. McCarter, "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," *HTR* 66.4 (Oct 1973) 403-12. McCarter, for example, ends his article on the "river ordeal" with the prophetic words: "In OT religion, judgment is so pervasive a factor, deliverance from waters or by crossing waters is such a central theme, that future study of the subject promises to be both complex and exciting" (412).

lens of cosmology and cosmogony (including the combat myth), and, more inductively, via epic literature, justifying—it is to be hoped—the need for further study of the pattern of going through the waters→ to the mountain of God→ for worship as a significant cultic pattern in the Pentateuch. Finally, and as a basic paradigm for understanding this pattern, we will review the judicial river ordeal in the ancient Near East.

A. Cosmic Waters in the Ancient Near East

The cosmologies of the ancient Near East rather consistently⁹⁸ portray the sacred mountain surrounded by cosmic waters.⁹⁹ This geography is inseparable from cosmogony in as much as the cosmic mountain—and the temples that architecturally symbolize the mount—represents “the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process.”¹⁰⁰ One of Sargon’s inscriptions describe Mount Simirria, for example, as “a mighty mountain peak, which spikes upward like the cutting-edge of a spear, on top of the mountain-range, the dwelling of Belet-ili, rears its head. Above, its peak leans on the heavens, below, its roots reach into the netherworld.”¹⁰¹ According to the Babylonian tradition depicted in the Gudea Cylinders, the Eninnu temple built by Gudea represented the primordial hill that arose

⁹⁸ J.E. Atwell (“An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1,” *JTS* 51.2 [2000] 456-57), for example, posits: “the emergence of the first piece of dry land as the waters recede is a universal feature which has been absorbed into all cosmologies.”

⁹⁹ P. Seely, “The Geographical Meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas’ in Genesis 1:10,” *WTJ* 59 (1997) 231-55 (245). J.H. Walton also notes the Egyptians sometimes referred to the Mediterranean as *shenwer*, the “great encirler” (*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006] 176 fn 53).

¹⁰⁰ J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 208. G. van der Leeuw (*Religion in Essence and Manifestation*, trans. J.E. Turner [London: Allen & Unwin, 1938] 55) states: “The mountain...was regarded as a primal and permanent element of the world: out of the waters of Chaos rose the primeval hill from which sprang all life....it was looked upon as the “navel” of the earth, as its focal-point and beginning. ...the *omphalos* was a primitive symbol of earth and of all birth; in ancient thought birth from stone was as usual as that from the fertile earth.”

¹⁰¹ W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1998) 98.

out of the chaos waters (*apsu*).¹⁰² Similarly, in Egyptian mythology Amun-Re began creation on the primeval mount that had arisen out of the chaos waters (Nun),¹⁰³ the temples of Egypt also likely correlating to this primordial mound.¹⁰⁴ Keel notes, for example, how the undulating design of the great wall surrounding the huge temple enclosure of Karnak is “intended to represent the primeval waters which formerly lapped around the temple hill.”¹⁰⁵ Already, then, one can appreciate how intimately connected cult and cosmos were in the ancient Near East.

By its rising above them, the cosmic mountain was thus associated with victory over the waters of chaos,¹⁰⁶ many ANE cosmogonies involving some sort of combat myth. Levenson underscores this concept of the sea in ANE mythology:

The sea was the great enemy of order both in Mesopotamia and in Canaan. Its defeat was the essential element in creation and won the victorious god kingship and the right to a palace (or temple) of his own.

¹⁰² D.W. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 136-37. J.M. Lundquist (“What is a Temple?” 208) notes that the Gudea Cylinders are “filled with the motif of the house (= mountain) rising up out of the primordial waters.” Cf. also M.A. Canney, “The Primordial Mound,” *JMEOS* 20 (1936) 25-40.

¹⁰³ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 28. Clifford also notes the “view that connects hillock with creation has been plausibly derived from the Egyptian experience of the sinking of the annual flood waters and the emergence of the first isolated peaks of mud, refreshed with new fertile silt and rich with new life” (26).

¹⁰⁴ J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?” 208. Cf. J.A. Wilson, “Egypt,” pp 31-121 in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, H. Frankfort, et. al., eds (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1946) 50-61; A. de Buck, *De Egyptische Voorstellingen betreffende den Oerheuvel* (Leiden: Brill, 1922); A. Saleh, “The So-Called ‘Primeval Hill’ and Other Related Elevations in Ancient Egyptian Mythology,” *MDAIK* 25 (1969) 110-20.

¹⁰⁵ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113. The artificial lake of the temple complex is also believed to have symbolized the primeval waters, cf. F.S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective*, vol. 1 (Boston: Wadsworth, 2009) 56; M.A. Canney (“Boats and Ships in Processions,” *Folklore* 49.2 [1938] 132) notes, more broadly, that in “ancient Egypt, a great temple was not complete without its sacred lake.”

¹⁰⁶ J. Blenkinsopp, e.g., notes “the temple-ziggurat represented the mound of creation, the first heap of dry land to appear over the flood waters. In keeping with this representation of victory over the watery chaos, one of the psalms speaks of Yahweh enthroned over the abyss (*yhwh lammabbûl yāšāḇ*), a powerful mythic image which is fully exploited in Jewish midrash” (“The Structure of P,” 285). However, beyond—perhaps, *because* of—the conquest of the primeval waters, the mountain is also known for being the source of the waters of life: “In the Phoenician ivory [seal], a masculine deity whose clothing simulates a mountain holds in his hands a vase with four streams flowing to vases at each corner.... One can see here the conception of the mountain within which is concentrated the mysterious powers of life, the source of life-giving waters.... An examination of the Ugaritic texts shows that the mountain of both El and Baal can be called cosmic. ...[I]t seems to be the paradisiac source of water that gives fertility...” (R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 97). The idea that the subdued or “controlled” waters of chaos become the source of the waters of life appears implicit. ANE temples “were symbolically the ‘embodiment of the cosmic mountain’ representing the original hillock first emerging from the primordial waters at the beginning of creation; *such waters themselves* were symbolized in temples together with fertile trees *receiving life from the waters*” (G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 195 [emphasis added]). See J.H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought*, 176f. The “cosmic tree,” having its roots sunk deep into the cosmic waters for nourishment brings out this aspect particularly; see, e.g., S. Parpola, “The Assyrian Tree of Life,” *JNES* 52 (1993) 161-208.

Creation, kingship, and temple thus form an indissoluble triad; the containment of the sea is the continuing proof of their eternal validity (e.g., Psalm 93). The promise of the divine king to commit the sea/river to the charge of his human vassal is surely “anchored in cosmic-mythological symbols of creation.” To be aware of this mythic dimension is not to deny the importance of the “historical symbols...of the grace of YHWH which was disclosed in Israel”....¹⁰⁷

The basic outline of the so-called “combat myth” is: the god (Marduk, Baal) battles the sea (Tiamat, Yamm, Lothan) and, upon conquest, establishes cosmic order, his kingship among the gods, and the foundation for his palace (temple).¹⁰⁸ In the Akkadian epic *Enuma elish*, the god Ea establishes his house upon the conquered waters of Apsu. This suggests that his palace/temple served the cosmic function of keeping the waters suppressed.¹⁰⁹ Later, in Tablet V, Marduk, after slaying Tiamat,

laid down her [text: his] head, heaped a mountain upon it,
Opened up such a spring that a torrent could be drawn off,
Then released through her eyes the Euphrates and Tigris...¹¹⁰

The gods go on to construct a temple tower called the “house of the foundation of heaven and earth.”¹¹¹ Then, having built his lofty abode upon the Apsu, Marduk addresses the Igigi and the Anunnaki:

When from the Apsu you go up for the Assembly,
There will be your night’s resting(-place) to receive all of you...¹¹²

This is a simple example of how the cosmogonic myth establishes an obvious pattern, based upon the cosmological geography: one must go through the waters of the Apsu to approach

¹⁰⁷ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 108-09. He quotes Y. Kaufman, *History of the Religion of Israel* ([Hebrew] Jerusalem: Bialik, 5720/1959) 2:181.

¹⁰⁸ This basic outline is summarized by J.D. Levenson (*Sinai and Zion*, 152-53). Cf. G.F. Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EQ* 46.2 (1974) 87: “It appears inescapable to recognize here [in Genesis 1]...a conscious polemic against the battle myth.” For a reassessment of some of Gunkel’s *Chaoskampf* assumptions, cf. J.H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East: Order Out of Disorder after *Chaoskampf*,” *CTJ* 43 (2008) 48-63. “In the Genesis prologue,” states M.G. Kline, “the Creator appears as a workman who performs his task and then takes his rest –or, more specifically, he is portrayed as a king who builds himself a palace and then occupies the throne” (*God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, 38).

¹⁰⁹ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 17. In fn 14 of the same page, Clifford notes the possible connection to Ps 29.10. Cf. W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 107-29.

¹¹⁰ B. Landsberger and J.V. Kinnier Wilson, “The Fifth Tablet of *Enuma elish*,” *JNES* 20 (1961) 161.

¹¹¹ Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 166.

Marduk's abode.¹¹³ Our main concern, however, is with the combat outline itself: "the Divine Warrior faces adversaries (the power of chaos), moves triumphantly to the sacred mountain (temple), and there is acclaimed as divine King over the cosmos."¹¹⁴ One finds this outline in the Ugaritic literature as well: Baal, after his victory over Yamm (god of the sea), has a temple constructed atop the heights of Mount Zaphon.¹¹⁵ This cosmogonic battle outline manifests a pattern similar to what we seek to expose in the biblical literature: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship (ascribing kingship).

Beyond creation texts, other epic¹¹⁶ literature portrays the idea of going through the cosmic waters to the mountain. Unfortunately, Tablet IX of *Gilgamesh* is missing 26 lines near the beginning of the quest, picking up after the hero's passage to and arrival at the mountain called Mashu where he encounters the scorpion-men guarding its gate, but the mount is described as cosmic:

Whose peaks [reach to] the vault of heaven
(And) whose breasts reach to the nether world below—¹¹⁷

However, and while the various summaries of his journeys given throughout the poem (e.g., I i 35-40; X 25-27) do not portray the pattern of crossing through waters to a mountain, the scorpion-being at the gate of the mount pointedly questions Gilgamesh (lines 64-69):

"Why have you traveled so distant a journey?
Why have you come here to me,
over rivers whose crossing is treacherous?

¹¹³ Obviously, as his abode is midway between the Apsu and the heavens, approaching Marduk from heaven would not require crossing the Apsu, as the next lines go on to indicate.

¹¹⁴ B.W. Anderson, "Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith," 5.

¹¹⁵ See the Baal Cycle, *ANET*, 129-42 (trans. by H.L. Ginsberg). Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113-14.

¹¹⁶ By "epic" we simply mean "texts that narrate the acts of gods and cultural heroes in extended poetry" (K.L. Sparks, *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005] 271). While other literary genres like hymns, wisdom tales, and prayers could certainly be utilized, this limited consideration serves merely as a token sample to justify our consideration of the cultic pattern in the biblical literature.

¹¹⁷ E.A. Speiser's translation, *ANET*, 83.

I want to learn your...

...

I want to learn..."¹¹⁸

Thus, in the mountain-guardian's first address to the hero—and this may be significant in light of the gate liturgy concept to be discussed further below—the pattern of crossing treacherous rivers to arrive at the cosmic mountain is discernible. In Tablet X, once through the mountain tunnel, Gilgamesh will have to cross a sea. He runs into the ale-wife, addressing her as follows:

Dwelling on the [sea-s]hore, O ale-wife,
Thou dost see its depth, all [...].
Show (me) the way [...].
If it be seemly, the sea [I will cross].¹¹⁹

Siduri the ale-wife responds to Gilgamesh:

Never, O Gilgamesh, has there been a crossing,
And none who came since the beginning of days could cross the sea.
Only valiant Shamash crosses the sea;
Other than Shamash, who can cross (it)?
Toilsome is the place of crossing,
Very toilsome the way thereto,
And in between are the Waters of Death that bar its approaches!
Where then, O Gilgamesh, wouldst thou cross the sea?
On reaching the Waters of Death, what wouldst thou do?¹²⁰

With the boatman Urshanabi, then, Gilgamesh crosses the cosmic seas and waters of death¹²¹ and meets with Utnapishtim at "the mouth of the rivers" (XI.195-96), a designation not uncommon for the abode of the gods atop the cosmic mount.¹²² Next, in the famous Tablet XI, Utnapishtim recounts the story of the worldwide deluge. Through the floodwaters, Utnapishtim's ship comes to a halt upon Mount Nisir (line 140). Atop this mount, he then offers worship to the gods:

¹¹⁸ M.G. Kovacs, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: Translated, with an Introduction, by Maureen Gallery Kovacs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989) 76. Sadly, another crucial 26 lines are missing at this point as well.

¹¹⁹ A.K. Grayson's notes and additions, *ANET*, 507.

¹²⁰ E.A. Speiser, *ANET*, 91.

¹²¹ Cf. W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 103-04.

¹²² The Baal Cycle, e.g., mentions El's abode as the "source of two rivers" (III AB C line 3; II AB iv-v line 20). This might even be implicit in Utnapishtim's words, immediately following, to Gilgamesh: "But now, who will for thy sake call the gods to Assembly...?" (E.A. Speiser, *ANET*, 95), as in: "You made it all this way to the abode of the gods, Gilgamesh, but now who's going to call them to Assembly?"

Then I let out (all) to the four winds
And offered a sacrifice.
I poured out a libation on the top of the mountain.¹²³

While the broad geography traversed by Gilgamesh moves from lands to mountain(s) to seas,¹²⁴ it is precisely Utnapishtim's residing across the Sea of Death—that is, outside of the immediate geography within which waters surround the lands and Mount Mashu—that makes this eschewed pattern necessary.¹²⁵ However, before being removed to the mouth of the rivers himself, Utnapishtim's epic journey moves through the waters (deluge) → to the mountain (Nisir) → for worship (sacrifice and libation). Keel summarizes the movement thus:

Ziggurat, like “step-tower,” can mean “mountaintop.” In the Gilgamesh epic, Utnapishtim, on the ziggurat, pours out a libation after the flood. Here “ziggurat” is the top of the mountain Nisir, on which Utnapishtim's “ark” has come to land.¹²⁶

Interestingly, the term “ziggurat” here forms a link between the cosmic mountain ideology of *Gilgamesh*, as literature, and the religious cult of the original audience(s).

Given the inclusion of the primeval waters in the cosmological landscape of ANE cultures, and the significant feature of the primal hill's arising out of them, it is unremarkable that those waters should be of a piece with the cosmic mountain symbolism informing the architecture and mythology of ANE temples, and taken for granted in much of the ANE literature. One might also expect, moreover, that cultic rituals similarly manifest a cosmic mountain ideology that integrates the cosmic waters. This is precisely what is found, for example, in the New Year ritual of Babylon, the enthronement festival, in which the statue of Marduk was led to a sanctuary where his victory would be reenacted by placing the statue on

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹²⁴ I ranged and wandered over all lands,/ I traversed difficult mountains,/ And I crossed all the seas! (X.25-27; E.A. Speiser, *ANET*, 92). See W. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 96-108, 320.

¹²⁵ It may also be that the treacherous rivers apparently surrounding Mount Mashu are simply absorbed into the general delineation of the “difficult mountains,” being inseparable from the idea of the cosmic mountain.

¹²⁶ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113.

“the sea” (presumably a podium) after a dramatized battle.¹²⁷ Another significant ritual, the river ordeal, will be considered in section C below, after a cursory look at the cosmic waters in ancient Israel.

B. *Cosmic Waters in Ancient Israel*

In the canonical literature of Israel, the cosmic waters play a similarly significant role, particularly in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives—these, however, will be explored in their respective chapters¹²⁸—in addition to serving as a conceptual backdrop for many of the Psalms.¹²⁹ Along with the presence of the cosmic mountain idea in the Hebrew Bible, the mount’s rising above the primordial waters at creation appears implicit.¹³⁰ While YHWH is portrayed as the sovereign water-wielder in the narratives of our thesis, that is, quite outside of the combat myth *per se*, yet, in a mythopoeic manner, the biblical poets utilize the battle imagery to portray him as the divine warrior who has performed great feats in history (cf., e.g., Isa 51.9-10; Ps 89.10-11; Job 26.12-13; Ezek 2.3-6).¹³¹ Indeed, in what may be the earliest Israelite poetry, the Song of the Sea in Exod 15, one finds “the motif of the battle with the sea and

¹²⁷ See R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 78.

¹²⁸ Thus we offer here only the briefest of considerations.

¹²⁹ Cf. O. Keel’s *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*.

¹³⁰ “The primordial mound projects backward into history to the period of the creation of the earth, where, according to one Hebrew tradition, the primordial mound was the first land that emerged from the waters of chaos during the creative period (cf. Genesis 1.9-10). Identified as the consecrated *topos*, the primordial mound represented order and definition amidst the unruly chaotic waters” (D.W. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 136-37). Cf. also M.A. Canney, “The Primordial Mound,” 25-40.

¹³¹ Cf. M.K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster*. In pp 55-105, particularly, Wakeman explores the biblical use of the sea-monsters Rahab, Leviathan, Tannin, and the transitional terms Peten, Nahash, Tehom, and Yam. Often, the references comprise mythopoeic descriptions of God’s action in history with, e.g., Egypt being likened to the chaos monster (60-1, 74). Wakeman also notes the dual imagery, waters and mount, ascribed to God: “Corresponding to the two definitions of the monster [land-beast and sea-beast], there are two ways of conceiving of God that have a strong tradition in biblical poetry. He is ‘the fountain of living waters,’ the life-giving force rather than the destructive floods, and ‘the rock of our salvation,’ the security of solid ground rather than its rigid, unyielding closedness. As the enemy is most often described through the figure of the sea, so God is called a rock thirty-three times...” (138). Cf. also N. Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (BS 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 102-05.

probably the mount of heritage, the fruit of the victory over the sea.”¹³² Weinfeld notes the idea of overcoming the waters and establishing the holy abode in various “enthronement” psalms:

The enthronement psalm, Psalm 93 (in the background of which stands God’s overcoming the “rivers, mighty waters” (נְהַרֹתַי, מַיִם רַבִּים) – concepts familiar from the Ugaritic myth *nhr il rbm*) – speaks of the establishment of the world, and moreover, of the throne of God, which is established following his enthronement and is mentioned in proximity to the “house of the LORD” and “holy abode” (בֵּית־יְהוָה). We find therefore in this psalm the three motives: victory and enthronement, Creation and Temple connected together, as they are in the Mesopotamian epic. The victory over “mighty waters” and the enthronement of God in his “sanctuary” are found also in Psalm 29 (vv 3, 10). In Ps 89 too we find the foundation of the world together with the victory over Rahab, the *Teru’ah* (v 16) and kingship.¹³³

While these various psalms already manifest the prevalence of the cosmic waters within the realm of the cult, one also finds the idea in the expected parallels between cosmology/cosmogony and the temple cultus, specifically in the architectural features of the Solomonic temple.¹³⁴ The “Bronze Sea” of Solomon’s temple, for example, may represent the quelling of the great deep.¹³⁵ S. Il Kang thus argues translating הַיָּם מוּשָׁק hayyām mûṣāq (1 Kgs 7.23) as “the Sea has been restrained!”¹³⁶ For our purposes we simply note that, based on such cosmological and cosmogonic symbolism found in Israel’s literature and common throughout the ancient Near East, one has reason to anticipate the sort of pattern one in fact finds in the epic narratives of

¹³² R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 141.

¹³³ M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 508. Quite similarly, H.G. May writes (“Some Cosmic Connotations of *mayim rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” 16): “Two significant allusions to ‘many waters’ are in association with the picture of the enthronement of Yahweh. The first is Ps 93, which Montgomery called ‘a brief commentary’ on the myth of the struggle of Baal against Sea and River, and which Gaster believes ‘clearly alludes to the combat of Yahweh (i.e., Baal) against the Sea and River.’ Here the ‘rivers’ (*n’hārôt*), often associated with the unruly waters of the deep, have lifted up their voice and roaring, but mightier than the sound of ‘many waters,’ mightier than the waves of the sea, Yahweh on high is mighty. Note the association of ‘many waters,’ ‘sea,’ and ‘rivers.’ The enthroned Yahweh is one whose power is greater than that of the insurgent waters. The second is Ps 29, a psalm of the enthronement of the storm-God....Vs. 3 is reminiscent of the conflict with the insurgent waters, and in vs. 10 the Lord sits enthroned above the flood.”¹³³

¹³⁴ See E. Bloch-Smith, “Who is this King of Glory?”; R.E. Clements, *God and Temple*, 65, 67; Clifford, *Cosmic Mountain*, 178-79; Y.M.-J. Congar, *The Mystery of the Temple or the Manner of God’s Presence to His Creatures from Genesis to the Apocalypse*, trans. R.F. Trevett (London: Burns & Oats, 1962) 94-100; G.E. Wright, “Temple in Palestine-Syria,” *BA* 7.4 (1944) 65-77 (74); A. Parrot, *The Temple of Jerusalem* (SBA 5; New York: Philosophical Library, 1955) 52; J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 286-97; M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 30.

¹³⁵ Cf. H.J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament*, trans. G. Buswell (Oxford: Blackwell, 1966) 87 fn 21; E. Bloch-Smith, “Who is this King of Glory?” 20f; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 179; H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” 20: “The sea of bronze (1 Kings 7.23ff) stood for the cosmic sea, the *ḥhôm*, as the subterranean ocean from which all fertility was derived.”

¹³⁶ S. Il Kang, “The ‘Molten Sea,’ or Is It?” *Bib* 89.1 (2008) 102.

creation, deluge, and sea crossing: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship, a pattern we dub “cultic” in as much as it has to do with approaching God, and which thus foreshadows the tabernacle cultus. Under the monarchy, the temple worship of Israel established upon Zion never lost its cosmic mountain significance, as Ps 99.9 makes clear: “Exalt YHWH our God/ worship at his holy mountain.” Not only the temple but the whole city of Jerusalem could be absorbed into the cosmic mount as the parallelism of Ps 48.1-2 [Heb 2-3] demonstrates:

Great is YHWH/ greatly to be praised
 In the city of our God/ his holy mountain
 Beautiful in elevation/ joy of the whole earth
 Mount Zion on the sides of the north/ the city of the great king

Toward understanding the significance specifically of the “through the waters” aspect of the cultic pattern, we turn now to consider a widespread ANE ritual, the so-called judicial river ordeal.

C. The Judicial River Ordeal

In his study, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” McCarter argues that the widespread Mesopotamian phenomenon of trial by river ordeal, judging in legal cases being a primary function of *id*, the (divine) River, constitutes a conceptual backdrop by which certain biblical passages may be better understood.¹³⁷ Taking the second law of Hammurabi’s Code as exemplary of the basic process, an accused person would cast himself into the river, that is, into the hands of the divine judge, who would then render the verdict as follows:

if the river has then overpowered him, his accuser shall take over the estate; if the river has shown that seignior to be innocent and he has accordingly come forth safe, the one who brought the charge of sorcery

¹³⁷ P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal,” 403-12. McCarter ends his article with the prophetic words (412): “In OT religion, judgment is so pervasive a factor, deliverance from waters or by crossing waters is such a central theme, that future study of the subject promises to be both complex and exciting.” Cf. also B. Lafont, “The Ordeal,” pp 199-210 in *Everyday Life in Mesopotamia*, J. Bottero with contributions from A. Finet, B. Lafont, and G. Roux; trans. A. Nevill (Baltimore: John Hopkins U, 2001); M.H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 1955) 69-71; M.K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster*, 90-1.

against him shall be put to death, while the one who threw himself into the river shall take over the estate of his accuser.¹³⁸

Emergence from the waters thus signified innocence while being overpowered by them signified the divine verdict of guilt. Ordeals, then, were judicial in nature (establishing “legal truth”), supernatural (justice rendered by deity), and universal (widespread throughout the ancient Near East).¹³⁹ In the supposition that this paradigm may indeed serve as a framework in which to better understand the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, we will now review the judicial river ordeal in the ancient Near East and its suggested conceptual application in biblical literature.

To begin, the significant role of cosmology or “cosmic geography” should be underscored once more for its ideological power, its influence upon the basic ANE institutions and rituals. In fact, the close correlation in the ancient Near East between the cosmic mountain and the waters may lie behind the variant translation of the Akkadian word *huršānu*, given as “mountain (area),” and “the place of the river ordeal.”¹⁴⁰ “From the connection of the cosmic mountain and the world encircling river where the dead were judged, *huršan* in Akkadian came to denote the place of the river ordeal,” writes Pope, so that *huršan* becomes virtually identified with the “infernal river,” and the river ordeal ritual itself a symbol of the real *huršan* of the last

¹³⁸ “The Code of Hammurabi,” trans. T.J. Meek, *ANET*, 166. Cf. M.G. Kline, “Oath and Ordeal Signs I” *WTJ* 27.2 (1965) 132. Kline further relates the river ordeal to Christ’s crucifixion: “The ultimate judicial origin of the figure [of Christ’s sufferings as a water ordeal] in the literal practice of trial by water is evidenced by the judicial atmosphere and structuring of Psalms in which it appears. The suppliant pleads in the language of the law court. Against the lying accusations of his adversaries he protests his innocence and appeals for a manifestation of divine justice, that is, for deliverance out of his ordeal” (136). Cf. C.F.D. Moule, “The Judgment Theme in the Sacraments,” pp 464-81 in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology: Studies in Honor of C.H. Dodd*, W.D. Davies and D. Daube, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

¹³⁹ See T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 10-51.

¹⁴⁰ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 23-24. Cf. E.T. Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of the Gods*, 130-35.

judgment.¹⁴¹ Similarly, the Ugaritic term *hršn* encompasses both the mountainous and watery features of El's abode, making the usual formula *nhr* and *thm* unnecessary.¹⁴² Ilurugu, another "river of ordeal," is understood as "cosmic," a river at the edge of the world that leads to the world below.¹⁴³ McCarter further explains the relation of the cosmic river to the cosmic mountain, with application to the biblical psalms:

In the cosmology of Mesopotamian myth, the term *huršānu* (< Sumerian *huršag*) referred at once to mountainous regions and to the river ordeal. Mythologically the *huršānu* functions as the place of judgment and interrogation at the entry to the Underworld. In its cosmic aspect the mountain is the place from which judgment is pronounced. At least this is true at Ugarit, where the cosmic mountain of 'El is also referred to by the borrowed term *huršānu*. The connection between the two meanings of *huršānu* is thus an obvious one, insofar as the river ordeal is understood to take place at the foot of the mountain, the source of the waters and entrance to the Underworld. Understood against this background, the imagery of the psalms in question becomes clear. The threat of death is associated with the raging cosmic waters, which in Israel are understood to be under Yahweh's control. The appeal of the victim is thus to Yahweh as judge. As might be expected in an Israelite adaptation of this cosmology, there is no question of the River's functioning independently....[I]t is Yahweh who is responsible for the deliverance from the waters.¹⁴⁴

Along this line, Keel compares the Babylonian Map of the World with the geographical awareness of the Psalms, and observes:

[The] experiential horizon may have been operative in Ps 139.8-10, which celebrates the omnipresence of God:

If I ascend to *heaven*, thou are there!
If I make my bed in *Sheol*, thou are there!
If I take the wings of the *morning* [dawn]
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the *sea*,
even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.

As in Amos 9.2-3, which cites in the same order *heaven* and *Sheol*, the *top of Carmel* and the *bottom of the sea*, we have here two cosmographical concepts (heaven and the world of the dead) followed by two predominantly geographical concepts (the locus of the dawn and the remotest part of the sea). The conceptual pairs in Ps 139.8-10 and Amos 9.2-3 may be taken as designations of "above" (heaven, dawn, top of Carmel) and "below" (bottom of the sea, uttermost part of the sea, Sheol) (cf. Ps 68.22). The same is true in Ps 107.3, where we find the conceptual pairs, rising-*šāpōn* and setting sea. Without any text-critical justification, the

¹⁴¹ M.H. Pope, *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, 69-70. Pope cites the composition *Ludlul Bēl Nīmēqi* (R.H. Pfeiffer, *ANET*, 437a): "on the holy river shore (in the underworld) where the (last) judgment of men is manifested" as it is explained by an ancient commentary "beside the river *huršan*" (H.C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, vol. 5 [London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1884] pl. 47, rev. l. 31).

¹⁴² *Ibid.* The Ugaritic title "Judge River" also makes likely a similar river ordeal in Ugarit. Cf. C.H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949) 11 fn 1.

¹⁴³ T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 583.

¹⁴⁴ P.K. McCarter, "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," 407-08, 412. The *huršan* also appears to be a recognized institution, and failure to take the ordeal would result in fines paid at the "gate of the *huršan*" (T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 415).

more recent commentators emend *yām* (sea) to *yāmîn* (south). But if *šāpôn* is understood as “mountaintop” and *yām* as a paraphrase of “below,” then we have in Ps 107.3 a statement parallel to Amos 9.2-3 and Ps 139.8-10....(heaven, *šāpôn* – Sheol, *yām*).¹⁴⁵

Given the cosmological framework of the ordeal, then, the wicked—those declared guilty by the divine judge—are consigned to the watery abode of the dead. The cosmic waters of Canaanite cosmology, for instance, not only have their confluence at the mountain of 'El, but they are also located at the entrance to the watery abode of Môt (Death).¹⁴⁶ Similarly, the Ilurugu, having access to the nether world (“mouth of hell” ka-gáraša), may indicate guilt or innocence by bringing the accused down (or not) to the netherworld.¹⁴⁷ Jonah 2.7a may be cited as an explicit biblical parallel:¹⁴⁸

At the roots of the mountains,

¹⁴⁵ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 23.

¹⁴⁶ P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 405. For water as imagery of death, cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 73-76.

¹⁴⁷ T.-S. Frymer Kensky, *Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 596.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* G.A. Anderson, through the lens of Syriac Christian and Jewish exegesis, also points out the significance of this cosmology as conceptual framework: “This mythic idea [of the cosmic mountain joining heaven and earth] is certainly the background for equating the underworld with Gehenna (*gay' Hinnom*, “valley of Hinnom”) an infamous valley in Jerusalem. Many have argued that the burning of children in that valley caused it to be identified as the underworld or place of eternal torment. Although this was probably a contributing factor, the mythic idea that the cosmic mountain joins the heavenly sphere to the underworld is the more probable source...[According to Ephraim's *Hymns on Paradise*], Jerusalem, when seen as the cosmic mountain, provides entry not only into the heavenly realm, but also the underworld. Access to this abyss is appropriately located at the foot of this cosmic mountain, just as it is in Canaanite religion. The valley of Hinnom is a most fitting referent for this mythic image...The mountain of Eden was the *Axis Mundi*. It not only reached to the very edge of heaven, but it also was located near the entrance to Gehenna. Only a chasm separated the two. Within paradise were the bubbling cosmic streams which the tormented souls of Gehenna could only glimpse...From this spot of origin, these cosmic streams went forth to fertilize all the earth...In the *Cave of Treasures* the generation of Noah sought safety on the slopes of the mountains of paradise, but they were unable to climb it. Its holy nature would not allow those of a sinful and profane spirit to benefit from its security. A similar motif is found in the Jewish work *Midrash ha-Gadol* (on Gen 7.20)...In Surah 11.44-45, Noah's son attempts to save himself from the flood, he declares: ‘I will seek refuge at a mountain which will protect me from the water.’ Noah replied: ‘There is no guardian today from God's decree except for the one upon whom God has shown mercy.’ The concept of the mountain as a refuge or guardian, and the attempt by the wicked to ascend it reflects the exegetical world of Syriac Christian and Jewish exegesis (but the notion that one of Noah's sons attempted to climb it is purely Islamic in origin)” (“The Cosmic Mountain,” 215-16 fn 21, 202, 219 fn 39). This idea fits well with Lundquist's tenth proposition about temples: “The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave...The temple is the link between this world and the next. It has been called ‘an antechamber between the worlds’” (“What is Temple?” 215). Cf. also J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*: “God's revelation is connected to the symbolic imagery of a river in the prophet Isaiah; God's prophetic word is compared to ‘The waters of Shiloah that flow softly’ (Isa 8.6). Because the people reject God's word, ‘the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many’” (60), where the idea of judgment is connected with the river symbolism.

I descended to the Underworld.
Its gates were behind me forever.

Sheol lies at the roots of the World Mountain.¹⁴⁹ “Thus the subterranean waters through which one must pass in the descent to *Sheol* are identified with the hostile waters of chaos. The victory over menacing death comes from Yahweh, who triumphs over the waters.”¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Cross writes: “The cosmic river springing up from the underworld is also ‘Judge River,’ *tâpit nahar*, as in Mesopotamia the place of the river ordeal, the place of questioning or judgment, as one enters the underworld, whence the term *šē’ôl*.”¹⁵¹ Albright, to be sure, had already proposed the etymology of *Sheol* as the place where judgments are made, or “chamber of fates.”¹⁵² This etymology, as Cross convincingly argues, is favorable in light of the Akkadian use of the same root, *šālu*, for judicial inquiry, haling to judgment, and, significantly, “precisely in connection with the river ordeal.”¹⁵³ In Job 31.23, Job “calls the River of ordeal the *’êd ’ēl*,” which consistent with the psalms is “where the location of the waters of judgment is ‘at the sources of the sea’ (Ps. 18 [2 Sam 22]: 16) and ‘the root of the mountains’ (Jonah 2:7), in short, at the foot of the mountain of ’El/Yahweh.”¹⁵⁴ The river ordeal thus constitutes a “judgment” through which the righteous are granted access to the refuge of the cosmic mountain while the wicked are consigned to the underworld.

Thus, while the Assyro-Babylonian river ordeal does not appear to have been practiced by Israel, one can, again, affirm its function as a conceptual backdrop, and also note that there

¹⁴⁹ Cf. J.A. Montgomery, “The Holy City and Gehenna,” 38; A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 71.

¹⁵⁰ B.W. Anderson, “Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship,” pp 207-32 in *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 222.

¹⁵¹ F.M. Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research,” pp 91-105 in *Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, T.G. Madsen, ed. (RSMS 9; BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984) 95.

¹⁵² W.F. Albright, “The Etymology of *šē’ôl*,” *AJSLL* 34.3 (1918) 209-10.

¹⁵³ F.M. Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Tabernacle,” 95 fn 11.

¹⁵⁴ P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” 410. In Dante’s *Commedia*, interestingly, treacherous waters surround the mount of purgation such that Ulysses and his crew are plunged into *Sheol* for their prideful approach (*Inferno* XXVI), while God’s people are granted safe baptismal passage (*Purgatorio* II).

are some references to ordeals by water in the Hebrew canon.¹⁵⁵ YHWH's control over the waters, furthermore, includes his ability to rescue souls from *Sheol*, the "pit" under the waters (cf. Pss 18, 69).¹⁵⁶ McCarter lists Psalms 18 (2 Sam 22), 66, 69, 88, 124, 144 and the psalm in Jonah 2 as examples which clearly presuppose "a situation of judgment by water," where "the threat of death [is] expressed in terms of raging waters," that is, of the "cosmic waters," each passage containing most or all of the following elements:¹⁵⁷

- (1) the psalmist is beset by raging waters;
- (2) he is surrounded by accusers / confronted by enemies;
- (3) he protests his innocence and reliance upon God, beseeching him for deliverance from the waters;
- (4) he is drawn out of the waters and set in a safe place.

For the justified individual, vindicated through the ordeal, the process may have had something of a purifying aspect (at least, in the sense of cleansing the person from the shame of accusation).

The Babylonian Marduk, for example, claimed to be the god who makes the judgment in the river ordeal, purifying (convicting? – *ub-ba-bu*) the good and the evil.¹⁵⁸ The Sumerian text Temple Hymn 21 reads: "Uruku(g)...within you [your "core"]"¹⁵⁹ (is) the river ordeal which vindicates the just man."¹⁶⁰ It should also be noted that the Ilurugu-house may be associated with the washing of ritual purification,¹⁶¹ as Levitical regulations may also be tied to the cosmic

¹⁵⁵ Z. Falk, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Times*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: BYU and Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2001) 56; N.M. Tischler, *All Things in the Bible, vol 2: M-Z: An Encyclopedia of the Biblical World* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006) 642-43; T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 474-80.

¹⁵⁶ R. Luyster, "Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament," *ZAW* 93 (1981) 7.

¹⁵⁷ P.K. McCarter, "The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature," 404, 406. Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 21; B.W. Anderson, "Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship," 219-23.

¹⁵⁸ T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 428. This ordeal may have involved a rite of purification (429).

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 538.

¹⁶⁰ A.W. Sjöberg, E. Bergmann, S.J., G.B. Gragg, *The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns: Texts from Cuneiform Sources, vol. 3* (Locust Valley, NY: Augustin, 1969) 263-69. The Sumerian temples, Nusku in Nippur and Bau in Urukuga, are depicted as having "Ilurugu" or "Ilurugu-house" (judge/river ordeal) within them – the temple is the Ilurugu-house "which does not kill the upright (while) sorting (out) the evil" (cf. T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 537-38). See also "Hymn to Meslamtaea and Lugalgirra in honor of King Ibbisuen of Ur," a portion of which reads: "the Ilurugu which acquits the righteous, they surround the evil like wood(ed fetters)" (T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 594).

¹⁶¹ T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 429, 540-1.

waters of creation (and the deluge). More to the point, the river ordeal follows the basic pattern of going through the waters to the mountain that will be considered in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives in the following chapters. Far from being a novel interpretation, Kline had already offered such a reading of the deluge in his 1965 article “Oath and Ordeal Signs”:

Archetype of water ordeals was the Noahic deluge. The main features of the subsequent divine-river trials were all found in the judgment of the Flood: the direct revelation of divine verdict, the use of water as the ordeal element, the overpowering of the condemned and the deliverance of the justified, and the entrance of the ark-saved heirs of the new world into the possession of the erstwhile estates of the ungodly.¹⁶²

Our study however seeks to integrate this aspect into the overall pattern of approaching the divine Presence. Thus it is the righteous or innocent alone who are consequently granted access to the sacred mount. The next section on gate liturgy will explore this approach (subsequent to the water ordeal).

III. THE GATE LITURGY

In Israel, protecting the sacred space of the temple may have entailed a gate liturgy as found in Psalm 15, which begins with the question, emphatically repeated (v 1):¹⁶³

יְהוָה מִי־יָגוּר בְּאֹהֶלְךָ מִי־יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ:	YHWH, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy mountain?
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A similar question is asked in Psalm 24 and in Isaiah 33:

מִי־יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר־יְהוָה וּמִי־יִקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קֹדֶשׁ	Who shall ascend into the Mount of YHWH? Or who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps 24.3)
מִי יָגוּר לָנוּ אֵשׁ אוֹכֶלֶת מִי־יָגוּר לָנוּ מִזְקָרֵי עוֹלָם	Who among us shall dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? (Isa 33.14)

The answer provided by Psalm 15, perhaps recited by the priests guarding¹⁶⁴ the temple precincts, is (v 2): whoever’s walk is “blameless” (תָּמִים *tāmîm*), whoever works “righteousness”

¹⁶² M.G. Kline, “Oath and Ordeal Signs,” 132. Kline also considered the Red Sea and Jordan crossings as “other outstanding water ordeals of the Old Testament” (132-33). His assessment of the deluge as archetype should, perhaps, be balanced by greater emphasis on the cosmic waters of the creation event.

¹⁶³ Cf. B.K. Waltke (“Psalm 15: An Exposition in Honor of Alan Groves,” pp 17-32 in *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: Essays in Memory of J. Alan Groves*, P. Enns, D.J. Green, M.B. Kelly, eds. [Phillipsburg: P&R, 2010] 23) who notes both the emphatic repetition of “who” and the escalation of its predicate.

(סֶדֶק *sedeq*), whoever speaks “truth” (אֱמֶת *emet*) in his heart—such a one may ascend the mount of YHWH’s abode. The particular ambiguities of this cultic ritual, if it indeed took place at all, are not of immediate consequence. At issue for our purpose is simply that cosmic mountain ideology served as a paradigm or conceptual backdrop for Israel’s cultus so that approaching YHWH in worship at the temple was comprehended, beyond the inevitable metonymy given the temple’s locale atop the hill of Zion, via a narrative liturgy: a mythopoeic journey to the cosmic mountain of God. As an archetypal temple, the cosmic mountain also has gates, barring entrance along the pathway of ascent to the divine abode, so that a ritual “gate” or “entrance liturgy” becomes an anticipated possibility in narratives informed by a cosmic mountain ideology. While this possibility—that the question “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” runs like an undercurrent through the narratives of our thesis—will be explored in the following chapters with reference to the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, respectively, here we will briefly survey the concept of the gate liturgy in relation to the temple cultus of Israel, including general ANE parallels, and the underlying cosmic mountain ideology informing it.

Fundamentally, the gate liturgy has to do with stipulations for who may enter the sacred space of a temple. Somewhat similar to the entrance liturgies in biblical literature are the inscriptions engraved on side doors leading into the temples of Graeco-Roman Egypt, such as found at the temple of Edfu which reads (*Edfou*, III, 360.12-361.5):

Do not initiate wrongfully; do not enter when unclean; do not utter falsehood in his house; do not covet the property <of his temple>; do not tell lies; do not receive bribes; do not discriminate between a poor man and a great; do not add to the weight or the measuring-cord but (rather) reduce them; do not tamper with the corn-measure.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Guarding the threshold of sacred space was a priestly function. Cf. R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 47. Nelson cites 2 Kgs 12.9; 25.18; Jer 35.4.

¹⁶⁵ H.W. Fairman, “A Scene of the Offering of Truth in the Temple of Edfu,” *MDAIK* 16 (1958) 90.

Griffiths compares another such inscription (*Edfou*, V, 334.1-6), which contrasts the one “who speaks falsehood in thy house” with the one “who is pure, he who is upright and walks in (the path of) righteousness,” with the contrasting paths of Psalm 1.¹⁶⁶ But, further, he also notes the scholarly comparison between these Egyptian inscriptions with the attestations of innocence found in the *Book of the Dead* 125,¹⁶⁷ a portion of which reads:

Hail to you, great god, Lord of Justice! I have come to you, my lord, that you may bring me so that I may see your beauty, for I know you and I know your name... I have not done falsehood against men, I have not impoverished my associates, I have done no wrong in the Place of Truth, I have not learnt that which is not, I have done no evil, I have not daily made labour in excess of what was due to be done for me, my name has not reached the offices of those who control slaves, I have not deprived the orphan of his property, I have not done what the gods detest, I have not calumniated a servant to his master, I have not caused pain, I have not made hungry, I have not made to weep, I have not killed, I have not commanded to kill, I have not made suffering... I am pure, pure, pure, pure!¹⁶⁸

The comparison illustrates once more the cultic correspondence between temple liturgy and narrative—one’s temple service to Horus, in this case, parallels the soul’s journey upon death, both contexts informed by doorways/gates. Spell 127 of the *Book of the Dead* reads:

O you doorkeepers who guard your portals, who swallow souls and who gulp down the corpses of the dead who pass by you when they are allotted to the House of Destruction.... May you guide N, may you open the portals for him, may the earth open its caverns to him, may you make him triumphant over his enemies.¹⁶⁹

In one sense, of course, the concern for who may enter sacred space is already intimated by the presence of doors.

There were many reasons why temple doors were considered so important. They represented the entrance to the holy place, and the gate was often used in pictures as a symbol for the temple itself. ...The door, therefore, was the symbol for a central point in religion: the meeting between god and man.¹⁷⁰

The doors or gates of a temple, then, are necessitated by (and thus signifiers of) the holiness of the space.¹⁷¹ Sacredness is one of the main characteristics of temple space identified by

¹⁶⁶ J.G. Griffiths, *The Divine Verdict: A Study of Divine Judgment in the Ancient Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1991) 219.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, C. Andrews, ed., trans. R.O. Faulkner (New York: British Museum Press, 1985) 29-31.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁷⁰ A.S. Kapelrud, “The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise,” *JAOS* 70.3 (1950) 152.

Lundquist,¹⁷² and ultimately derives, as Kraus points out, from the divine Presence: “Der עליון wohnt auf dem Zion; gedacht ist an den Tempel (vgl. Ps 43.3; 84.2; 132.5). Der עליון hat seine Wohnung „geheiligt“ (קִדְּשׁ), d.h., er hat sie abgesondert und unnahbar gemacht (Ex 19.23).”¹⁷³

Protecting the divine abode from profanation was the function—common throughout the ancient Near East—of the temple door guardians (cherubim, lion, genii, etc.),¹⁷⁴ eventually performed by priests. One such Sumerian guardian Ig-alim(-ma), whose name means “the (divine) door of the bison,” had the primary function, as described in Gudea Cylinder B VI 11-12:

To admit the righteous,
to keep away the wrong doer.¹⁷⁵

Much like the *šēdu* and *lamassu* who guarded entry to temples, then, Ig-alima’s function was “to decide who should be admitted to the temple, i.e. to the god.”¹⁷⁶ An additional way of protecting sacred space from profanation in the ancient Near East was via the ritual lustrations by which the worshiper could “wash his hands in innocence” (Ps 26.6; cf. 24.4; 73.13).¹⁷⁷ The emplacement of guardian genii and lustrations/sprinklings thus appear to be the two principal means of

¹⁷¹ The same goes for the doorkeepers. “Doorkeepers are vital in protecting this holy space ‘so that no one unclean for any reason should enter’ (2 Chron 23.19)” (R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful High Priest*, 136).

¹⁷² Cf. J.M. Lundquist, “What is a Temple?”; J.A. Carroll, “A Revised Temple Typology.”

¹⁷³ H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen I* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960) 345.

¹⁷⁴ Among the many examples mentioned by Keel is the Imdugud, the lion-headed eagle that guarded the temple gates: “A Sumerian hymn to Enlil praises the gate complex of Ur-Nammu (ca. 2050 B.C.): ‘The shepherd Ur-Nammu raised up to the heavens the lofty ‘House of the Mountain’ [temple of Enlil] in Duranki [‘Bond between Heaven and Earth’ = the temple district of Nippur], set it down to the astonishment of many. With refined gold he richly adorned the front of the ‘High Gate,’ the ‘Great Gate,’ the ‘Gate of Salvation of the Step-Mountains,’ the ‘Gate of the Unharvested Grain.’ There the Imdugud-bird killed many [foes]; no wicked one assails the eagles which stand there. The doors [of the temple] are lofty, clothed with dreadful radiance, vast in foundation, inspiring great fear” (*The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 123). Other examples include the pair of sphinxes in Ugarit guarding the temple of Baal; the *lamassu*, bulls with human heads and eagle’s wings, that guarded Assyrian temples and palaces; two lions from Tell Harmal near Baghdad guarding the entrance of the temple of Nisaba.

¹⁷⁵ A.S. Kapelrud, “The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise,” 152.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 155. Kapelrud goes on to delineate the similarities between the Sumerian door-deities and the biblical cherubim, a point to which we will return in the gate liturgy section of our next chapter on the Creation narrative.

¹⁷⁷ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 123. Keel correlates Ps 26.6 with model of a temple from Gezer which shows two fountains of holy water on either side of the entrance so that the worshiper might wash his hands before going about the altar in the forecourt. As will be addressed in a later chapter, the altar likely represented a miniature cosmic mount so that the pattern of going through the waters to the mount of God is manifest in this cultic act.

protecting sacred space in the ancient Near East,¹⁷⁸ the ritual of the latter protecting from the threat of the former. In Assyria, for example, priests would ladle holy water, using bronze *situlae*, and sprinkle those who dared pass the guardian demons.¹⁷⁹

Turning now to the general cosmic mountain ideology underlying ANE temples, two features delineated by Anderson are especially relevant: (1) the mountain is “a refuge and place of protection from the powers of chaos,” namely, the primeval waters, and (2) it is also especially sacred:¹⁸⁰

[W]e should mention the holiness of the cosmic mountain. Those who would ascend its heights must be righteous (Ps 15, 24.3-6).

Given the assumed mythopoeic cosmology, surviving the “river ordeal,” as considered in the previous section, may perhaps be seen as a prerequisite for the ascent of worship—while the wicked are judged via the waters and consigned to *Sheol*, the righteous are brought safely through the waters to the mount of the divine Presence. Thus ablutions/lustrations may be the cultic counterpart to the mythopoeic idea of the river ordeal, while the statues and/or priests stationed at the gateway of temples represent the mythic creatures guarding the mount.¹⁸¹ In the literature of ancient Israel, there indeed seems to be a connection between the entrance liturgy at the gate of the temple (cosmic mountain) and the idea of the river ordeal. Surviving the ordeal is related to having “clean hands”¹⁸² before YHWH who controls the many waters and has founded his throne upon them, as a consideration of several Psalms will seem to justify.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 123, 126 (see *Plate VIII*).

¹⁸⁰ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 190-91.

¹⁸¹ A.S. Kapelrud, e.g., posited three stages in the tradition of the temple gates in Sumerian religion: (1) the door itself was guardian and god; (2) the duties of divinity were transferred to figures standing beside the gate, the door itself still pictured with wings; (3) the guardians beside the door had taken over all duties and also the divine character (“The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise,” 153).

¹⁸² J.A. Tvedtnes (“Temple Prayer in Ancient Times,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, D.W. Parry and S.D. Ricks, eds. [Provo, Utah: FARM, 1999]), joins the righteousness of “clean hands” to temple sacrifices: “In Psalm 141.2, the lifting of hands in prayer is associated with temple sacrifice: ‘Let my prayer be set forth before thee as

Psalm 24, likely a pre-exilic witness to YHWH as Creator,¹⁸⁴ asks, “Who may ascend into the mount of YHWH? Or who may stand in his holy place?” This hill, Mount Zion, is central over

incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.’ ...There is symbolism in raising hands in prayer. The gesture exposes to God both the breast and the palms of the petitioner to show that they are pure (clean)...The message of Psalm [24] is clear: In order to enter into the temple (the ‘hill of the Lord,’ called ‘the mountain of the Lord’s house’ in Isaiah 2.2), one must have clean hands and a pure heart. In other words, both acts (represented by the hands) and thoughts (represented by the heart) must reflect righteousness, along with the lips that utter the prayer” (accessed at: <http://farms.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=21&chapid=105>).

¹⁸³ An interesting parallel is found in a Mesopotamian incantation, all the more significant as it mentions two of the rivers of Eden (Gen 2.10-14):

River which is pure,
Waters of the Tigris which are clean,
Waters of the Euphrates which are shining,
Tešba the man of the apsu,
Halhala the mother of the mountain,
Enki the king of the apsu,
Asarluhi the son of Eridu,
May they purify my hand,
May they cleanse my mouth,
May they make my foot shining(-clean),
May the evil tongue stand aside.
[Be adjured by heaven, be adjured by earth.]

T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 591-2 (bracketed section from a later version of same incantation).

¹⁸⁴ See R. Albertz, *Weltschöpfung und Menschenschöpfung untersucht bei Deuteriojesaja, Hiob und in den Psalmen* (CTM, 3; Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1974) 90-131; S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 41-42; R.S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of “Chaos” in the Hebrew Bible* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 118-22. Some critics understand this psalm as a cosmic battle between YHWH as Creator and the powers of chaos as the Sea, positioning the gate liturgy not only within the mythopoeic context of creation narrative(s) of Gen 1-3, but also of the deluge (Gen 6-9) and sea crossing (Exod 14ff) narratives in as much as they follow a cosmogonic pattern and describe a symbolic new creation. Cf. J.T. Willis, “Ethics in a Cultic Context,” pp 145-63 in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics: J Philip Hyatt, In Memoriam*, James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis, eds. (New York, KTAV, 1974) 153. Willis, while putting forth alternate ways of looking at Pss 15 and 24, summarizes the majority view (which interprets Pss 15, 24 as gate/entrance/*toroth* liturgies) with the following reasons: (1) Many religions in the ancient world required worshippers to meet certain conditions before allowing them to enter the sanctuary; (2) there are several examples of pilgrims or worshippers entering into dialogue with priests or prophets, in which the priest or prophet gives ethical instructions; (3) there are several OT texts which indicate that priests, Levites, and/or gatekeepers refused to allow worshippers entrance into the temple if they were unclean, which would require a prior investigation of those seeking entrance; (4) the terminology of Pss 15 and 24 points to a cultic situation, and most likely to the Jerusalem temple. R.E. Clements also critiques the “standard” view in his “Worship and Ethics: A Re-Examination of Psalm 15,” pp 78-94 in *Worship and the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of John T. Willis*, M.P. Graham, R.R. Marrs, S.L. McKenzie, eds. (JSOTSup 284; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999). While affirming that conditions of entry into a sanctuary were an important feature of cultic life in the ancient Near East (83), Clements approaches Ps 15 via the history of religion, asserting that the questions of v 1 are merely an “ornament” (87), “rhetorical device” (90), “novel feature” (94), and “peg” (90) upon which to hang the real concern –not worship, but social behavior, for which the cult has become subservient. This, however, is to reverse the concern of the psalm as we have it. A literary and canonical approach, taking the questions of v 1 sincerely, renders a natural correlation between worship and ethics, such as one finds in the pattern established by the Sinai narrative (Ex 19-24). S. Mowinkel noted that the “instruction about ‘the conditions of admittance’ here becomes part of the dramatically modeled liturgy of the procession at Yahweh’s royal entry into his abode (the Temple) after having obtained glory through the victory over the powers of chaos, and once more proved himself creator and saviour, and

the earth that was “founded (יָסַדָּהּ, *y’sādâh*) upon the seas” and “established upon the waters,” and, being the chosen abode of YHWH, only the one “who has clean hands (נְקִי כַפַּיִם *nēqî kappayim*) and a pure heart,¹⁸⁵ who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,” etc., may ascend.¹⁸⁶

Thus the psalm, as Mowinckel noted, contains *leges sacrae*, “laws of the sanctuary” that serve as qualifications for temple entry,¹⁸⁷ for approaching the divine Presence in the temple¹⁸⁸—indeed, he posited the sanctuary gate as the primary setting for Decalogue law.¹⁸⁹ Focus then shifts to the approaching Presence: the “gates” (שְׁעָרִים *š’ārîm*), the “everlasting doors” (פִּתְחֵי עוֹלָם *pithê*

having obtained kingship over the whole earth” (*The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* I, trans. D.R. Ap-Thomas [1962; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004] 178). He further connects the gate liturgy, the *toroth* of entry, to the commandments of the covenant at Sinai, at least gesturing, then, toward a view of the scriptural “cosmic” mountain as something of a narrative liturgy: “It is the same tendency that find expression in the traditions about the making of the covenant on Mount Sinai and in the commandments of the covenant, Ex 34 and 20. The custom of announcing the ‘sacred laws’ of the sanctuary, and the tradition about the making of the covenant and the ancient Yahweh law from Kadesh-Sinai have mutually attracted each other, and in this way the old custom of putting questions as to the laws of admittance was filled with the spirit and essence of Yahwism....The existing *toroth* of entry also belong to the decalogical tradition. The traditional figure 10 in such groupings of the fundamental commandments of the covenant (‘the decalogues’) is probably derived from the instruction of pilgrims: one commandment for each finger....The fundamental commandments of the covenant of Mount Sinai encounter the congregation outside the temple gate, and they are also heard at a climax of the festal cult, at the renewal of the covenant....But in the ‘liturgy of entry’ the commandments are of such a nature that the challenge must be taken up by the individual, who is put face to face with his personal responsibility...” (179-80). J.L. Mays’s comments on Ps 24, in view of Gen 1, would seem to resonate with God’s seventh day enthronement: “It is the Lord’s purpose to come as the “king of glory” who has won the battle over seas and rivers to found the world. Until the victor appears, it is not evident what the meaning of “world” is. Cosmic gates and sacred doors must open so that the sovereign who owns the world may enter and be present in the world. The liturgy of advent in vv 7-10 intones the meaning and destiny of the world” (“Maker of Heaven and Earth’: Creation in the Psalms,” pp 75-86 in *God Who Creates*, 79).

¹⁸⁵ In Israel, as well as Egypt, the heart “is the seat of thought and volition, and is therefore a decisive factor in judging a man” (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 73 fn 83).

¹⁸⁶ This idea is captured in the cultus of Israel as “Solomon’s temple was built upon the high-ground of Mount Zion, the acropolis of ancient Jerusalem. Consistent with this thought, the pilgrims of faith poetically go up to Zion (עֲלֶה, Ps 122.4) to worship the Most High God (עֲלֵיזָן, Ps 46.4) who dwells there” (W. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 55). An interesting parallel concept occurs in the Mesopotamian incantation: “River which is pure,/Waters of the Tigris which are clean,/ Waters of the Euphrates

¹⁸⁷ S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 177-78.

¹⁸⁸ L. Sabourin discusses “God’s theophany in the sanctuary” with reference to Ps 24 (*The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* [New York: Alba House, 1974] 407-09).

¹⁸⁹ See G. von Rad’s challenge to this position, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, E.W. Trueman Dicken, ed., trans. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966) 20ff. Cf. P.J. Budd, “Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel,” *VT* 23.1 (1973) 9.

‘*ôlām*)¹⁹⁰ in vv 7, 9, and the righteous King’s victorious¹⁹¹ entrance. “Gate” (שַׁעַר *ša‘ar*) is used of the tabernacle entrance (Ex 27.27; 35.17; 38.15, etc.), the gates of the Jerusalem temple (Jer 7.2; Ezek 8.14; Ps 118.10, etc.), and Bethel (Gen 28.17) where “the Gate of Heaven” (שַׁעַר הַשָּׁמַיִם *ša‘ar haššāmāyim*) is in parallel with “the House of God” (בֵּית אֱלֹהִים *bêt ʾlōhîm*),¹⁹² with reference here in Ps 24 being to YHWH’s holy mount—as the archetypal temple, the cosmic mountain has gates.¹⁹³

Returning to the qualifications, righteousness is, thus, a cult ethic (Ps 15.2; 24.5; Isa 33.15).¹⁹⁴ The platform (מַכּוֹן *m’kôn*) of God’s throne in Zion is righteousness and justice (cf. Pss

¹⁹⁰ S. Paas points out that use of עֹלָם *‘ôlām* has reference to the mythic, primeval character of the Temple (*Creation and Judgment*, 41). Cf. H.J. Kraus, *Psalmen I*, 345-6. J.L. Mays calls them “cosmic gates” (“Maker of Heaven and Earth,” 79). It may even be that עֹלָם פִּתְחֵי *piṭḥê ‘ôlām* in v 7 refers to the gates of the netherworld being opened upon the deity’s return from descending into the abode of death. Cf. A. Cooper, “Ps 24.7-10: Mythology and Exegesis,” *JBL* 102.1 (1983) 37-60. Cooper thus shows how early Christian exegesis of the psalm, applying it to Christ’s resurrection and ascension, is fundamentally compatible with its content. His interpretation would be strengthened by reference to the waters in v 2, and the general ANE cosmology whereby the cosmic mountain is founded upon the waters of *Sheol*.

¹⁹¹ Cf. A.R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1967) 74. When, in the Ugaritic literature, Ba‘al returns as king, triumphant over Chaos, the members of the divine council lift up their heads in rejoicing. Thus in Ps 24 the gates appear to be personified, lifting up their “heads” in joy and expectation. Cf. F.M. Cross, “The Divine Warrior in Israel’s Early Cult,” pp 11-30 in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, A. Altman, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966) 19-24; F.M. Cross’s comments at the end of R.D. Barnett, “Bringing the God into the Temple,” pp 10-20 in *Temples and High Places in Biblical Times: Proceedings of the Colloquium in Honor of the Centennial of Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion* (Jerusalem: Nelson Glueck, 1981) 20. Barnett’s article discusses the prominence of gateways, from an archeological perspective, for the processional entry of gods in cultic ritual.

¹⁹² M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 380.

¹⁹³ The gates of Ps 24 are thus “cosmic” or “heavenly” gates as J.-H. Kraus noted: “Irdisches und himmlisches Heiligtum werden in der altorientalischen Kultschau stets zusammengesehen. Darum könnte mit Recht gefragt werden, ob mit עֹלָם פִּתְחֵי nicht die „Tore des Himmels“ gemeint sind (dann müßte עֹלָם im Sinne von „ewig“, „himmlisch“ verstanden werden)” (*Psalmen I*, 205).

¹⁹⁴ Cf. J.T. Willis, “Ethics in a Cultic Setting,” pp 145-63 in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics: J.P. Hyatt, In Memoriam*, J.L. Crenshaw, J.T. Willis, eds. (New York: KTAV, 1974); G. von Rad, “‘Righteousness’ and ‘Life’ in the Cultic Language of the Psalms,” pp 243-66 in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E.W.T. Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966); P.D. Miller, “Kingship, Torah Obedience, and Prayer: The Theology of Psalms 15-24,” pp 279-97 in *Israelite Religion and Biblical Theology: Collected Essays* (JSOTSup 267; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 289: “As the torah psalms make clear, it is such righteousness that brings one into the presence of Yahweh” (289).

. Ethical purity as a pre-requisite for acceptable worship is not likely, then, a later theological development of the prophets. For the *šaddîq* in relation to Temple entrance, see M.R. Hauge, *Between Sheol and Temple: Motif Structure and Function in the I-Psalms* (JSOTSup 178; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 29-33; *idem.*, “Some Aspects of the Motif ‘The City Facing Death’ of Ps 68.21,” *SJOT* 1 (1988) 1-29; G. von Rad, “Die

89.15; 97.2).¹⁹⁵ Therefore, the one who would approach must be righteous.¹⁹⁶ Interestingly, the throne of Egypt during the Ramesside period is known to take the symbolic form *m3^ct*, the hieroglyphic symbol for “righteousness” that is at the same time a representation of the Primeval Mound.¹⁹⁷ It may be ventured that the Pharaoh on his throne represents the god enthroned over the mount, both the throne and the mount founded upon righteousness, the pharaoh commonly understood as the deity incarnate.¹⁹⁸ This is precisely what Hellmut Brunner, who suggested a relationship between Solomon’s throne and the mythological archetype of Egypt (cf. Pss 89.15; 97.2; Prov 16.12; 20.8), posited:

Dieser mythische Ort ist in jedem ägyptischen Tempel realisiert, auf ihm steht jeder Königsthron, insofern der König in seinem Amt eben dies göttliche Schöpfungswerk vollendet und bewahrt....Dabei haben die der ägyptischen Mythologie fernstehenden Israeliten die Deutung auf den „Urhügel“ aufgegeben, aber die auf Maat als die „Wahrheit, Gerechtigkeit“ beibehalten.¹⁹⁹

Keel further relates how this mythopoeic understanding informed the “gate liturgy” of the temple cultus:

Anrechnung des Glaubens zur Gerechtigkeit,” pp 130-35 in *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (TB 8; Munich: Kaiser, 1971); *idem.*, “‘Gerechtigkeit’ und ‘Leben’ in der Kultsprache der Psalmen,” pp 225-47 in *Gesammelte Studien*; W. Zimmerli, “Die Eigenart der prophetischen Rede des Ezechiel,” *ZAW* 66 (1954) 1-26; *idem.*, “‘Leben’ und ‘Tod’ im Buche des Propheten Ezechiel,” *TZ* 13 (1957) 494-508. J.L. McKenzie notes that according to Amos, Jeremiah, and Isaiah, divine rejection of the cultus was because “the offering of sacrifice is not joined with righteousness within the community” (*A Theology of the Old Testament* [Garden City: Doubleday, 1974] 59).

¹⁹⁵ M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 285.

¹⁹⁶ “Even in the royal theology itself, the claim that Jerusalem was Yahweh’s earthly abode meant that the inhabitants of the city should be righteous. As the site of God’s throne, Jerusalem should be filled with the righteousness and justice that were the foundation of that throne” (J.J.M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” *CBQ* 64.4 [2002] 685).

¹⁹⁷ S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 87; *idem.*, “He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven,” 319-25. Cf. *TDOT* 7:239. Rising first as it did from the sea of chaos, the Primeval Mount thus illustrates the righteousness must be the foundation of creation/cosmos. Further, the connection to the Primeval Mound links the Egyptian throne with the pyramid. “The step-pyramid had the shape not only of a hill, but (at least in their most ancient form) of a staircase. Spell 267 of the Pyramid Texts reads: ‘A staircase to heaven is laid for him [i.e., the king] so that he may climb up to heaven thereby’” (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 113). Cf. I.E.S. Edwards, *The Pyramids of Egypt* (Pelican Book A 168; Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1961) 288.

¹⁹⁸ The king was sometimes, in the form of a lion, emplaced as guardian of the temple gates. However, in his role as the priest, the colossal statues of his human form *in situ* were also be emplaced, guarding and mediating temple entrance. Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 124 ill. 163, 127 ill. 167a; W. Westendorf, *Das alte Ägypten* (Kunst im Bild; Baden-Baden: Holle, 1968) 108. This role seems to fit in with Adam’s role as priest-king in the narrative of Gen 2-3.

¹⁹⁹ H. Brunner, “Gerechtigkeit als Fundament des Thrones,” *VT* 8.4 (1958) 426-28.

The abyss is a dimension of Chaos and of death, but the high place, the mountain, belongs to the temple. In the psalms, the location of the temple is Jerusalem, or more precisely, Zion. One goes *up* to Jerusalem (Ps 122.4), and at the temple gates one asks who may (further) ascend the mountain of Yahweh (Ps 24.3)... According to the information provided by the psalms, the pilgrim addressed the priest (or priests) sitting at the temple gates (cf. 1 Sam 1.9), asking who might set foot on the mountain of Yahweh (cf. Pss 15.1; 24.3). The gates of the Jerusalem temple, as “Gates of Righteousness,” were open only to the “righteous.” ...He who professes fulfillment of the conditions (cf. Deut 26.13-14; Job 31) is pronounced righteous (*šdyq*) and may pass through the temple gates confident of receiving blessing from Yahweh (Ps 24.5; cf. 15.5).²⁰⁰

In Psalm 18, “an immense and splendid panorama of Israelite cosmology,”²⁰¹ the psalmist recounts how YHWH’s deliverance, in which “the channels of the sea were seen and the foundations (מוֹסְדוֹת *môś‘dôṭ*) of the world were uncovered” (v 15 [Heb 16]), was wrought because the psalmist had (we are twice told, vv 20, 24 [Heb 21, 25]) “clean hands” (בָּרֵךְ יָדַי *bōr yāḏay*).²⁰² The psalmist’s innocence is also described with the key terms “my righteousness” (צִדְקָתִי *sidqî*), synonymously paralleled with “clean hands” in vv 20, 24 [Heb 21, 25], and “blameless” (תָּמִיִּם *tāmîm*) in vv 23, 25 [Heb 24, 26], the precise qualifications for approaching YHWH’s holy mount as delineated in Psalm 15. This deliverance from the “cords of *Sheol*,” in which God drew the psalmist “out of many waters” (מִמַּיִם רַבִּים *mimmayim rabbîm*), moreover, leads to praise and thankful worship. Surviving the watery ordeal, then, has to do with “having clean hands,” so that washing one’s hands in innocence (whether by cultic lustration or otherwise) seems to carry the symbolism of going through the waters. The priests, to be sure,

²⁰⁰ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 114, 126. Keel utilizes the term “gate liturgy” on p 134. Because of the ethical requirements, J.-H. Kraus referred to Ps 24 as a “Thora-Liturgie” (*Psalmen I*, 194). Cf. also S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship*, 177-82; R.E. Clements (*God and Temple*, 74-75): “Because this worship entailed such a high privilege, it could not be granted lightly, or indiscriminately, but was limited to those who showed by their lives and conduct that they were loyal to the covenant of Yahweh (Ps 24.3-4). One of the priests, acting as ‘door-keeper,’ was entrusted with the important task of declaring the conditions of entry into Yahweh’s temple...Such ‘entrance-*toroth*’ were part of a liturgical celebration for all who shared in the worship of the temple...The righteous Israelite, on the other hand, knew that in Yahweh’s house there was a ‘fountain of life’ and a ‘river of delights.’ (Ps 36.8-10)”; H. Wildberger, *Isaiah 28-39*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2002) 289-92, who states “Scholars have long noted the parallels, in terms of content, with the negative confessions that are found in the Egyptian Book of the Dead, chap. 125” (291), illustrating a mythopoeic context for gate liturgies.

²⁰¹ W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 96. Eichrodt’s ensuing description manifests clearly the archetypal movement in the psalm from the waters of the underworld to the heavenly place of YHWH.

²⁰² Further, Ps 144 cries out for deliverance from the “many waters,” equated with those “whose right hand is a hand of falsehood (יְמִינָם יָמִין שֶׁקֶר).”

were commanded to wash their hands and feet via the bronze laver (subdued waters?) before approaching either the tabernacle or the altar (cosmic mount?)—upon pain of death, for “they shall wash with water, lest they die” (cf. Exod 30.17-21).²⁰³ Thus, the suggestion that the bronze laver “probably represented the primeval waters in ritual”²⁰⁴ appears sound.²⁰⁵

In the same vein, Psalm 26 offers the pattern of lustration before approaching the divine Presence in the temple: “I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about your altar, O YHWH ...YHWH, I have loved the habitation of your house, and the place where your glory dwells.” Around this center, the psalmist conveys the idea of his feet not slipping (vv 1, 12)²⁰⁶ amidst YHWH’s testing, his vindication contrasted by the judgment of sinners “in whose hands is a sinister scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes” (v 10). In Psalm 118, the psalmist’s deliverance from death leads to the bold proclamation (vv 19-20):

Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will go through them,
I will praise YHWH.
This is the gate of YHWH,
Through which the righteous will enter.

Here, as with Pss 15 and 24, the temple gates, according to their title, serve not only to forbid entrance to the unrighteous, but to bolster the confidence of the righteous to enter into the divine Presence. Thus Psalm 118 explicitly connects gate entry with righteousness:

This psalm, too, starts outside the temple gate and reflects the entry through the “Gate of Righteousness.” This is probably the name of an actual gate, very likely the innermost temple gate, through which only “the righteous”—the congregation in a state worthy of the cult—are allowed to enter....The very fact that the congregation was allowed to enter through the Gate of Righteousness was at the same time a corroboration of its righteousness and an imparting of the power of “righteousness” and happiness.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ Cf. F.B. Holbrook, “The Israelite Sanctuary,” pp 3-36 in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, F.B. Holbrook, ed. (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 1989) 19.

²⁰⁴ M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 65.

²⁰⁵ E. Bloch-Smith suggests the courtyard symbols conveyed YHWH’s triumphant enthronement, upon defeating the cosmic waters, etc. (“Who is this King of Glory?” 21). If granted, then the ritual approach would also involve a cultic “following in the footsteps of” YHWH, the precise cosmogonic *mimesis* we are considering.

²⁰⁶ “Those who participate in the cultus without fulfilling the condition of purity proceed on slippery, shaky ground (Ps 73.17-20)” (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 126).

²⁰⁷ S. Mowinckel, *The Psalm’s in Israel’s Worship I*, 180-81.

Beyond a “liturgical temple entrance formula”²⁰⁸ (Ps 15; 24.3-5; Isa 33.14-16; Mic 6.1-8), biblical literature also contains examples of divine punishment upon human *hybris* by ascent that appear to be of a piece with the gate liturgy, that is, informed by similar cosmic mountain ideology: Isa 14.13-16; Ezek 28.12-19; Gen 11.1-9.²⁰⁹ The first two references, prophetic oracles, entail “ascending not simply mountains in general but the ‘mountain of God,’”²¹⁰ and the third likely involves an (attempted) ascent into the divine abode via ziggurat construction.²¹¹ In the Isaiah oracle, the king of Babylon, who aspires to be enthroned upon God’s mountain, says: “I will ascend (אֶעֱלֶה *e‘leh*) to heaven/...I will also sit on the mount of assembly (בְּהַר-מוֹעֵד *b‘har-mô‘ēd*) on the farthest sides of Zaphon (בְּיַרְכְּתֵי צָפוֹן *b‘yark‘tê šāpôn*)” (v 13), but is rather, in poetic justice, brought down to *Sheol*, the “farthest sides” (יַרְכְּתֵי *yark‘tê*) of the Pit (v 15). Similarly in Ezekiel’s oracle, the king of Tyre, set upon the “holy mountain of God” (בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים *b‘har qōdeš ‘lōhîm*) (v 14), also described as “Eden, the garden of God” (v 13), is as a profane thing cast “out from the mountain of God” because he was filled with violence (הָמָאֵס *hāmās*)²¹² and sinned (v 16). Some have noted how the king’s creation is portrayed in Adamic and priestly terms, as is his judgment: being turned to “ashes” for “defiling your sanctuaries” (תִּלְלֶתָּ בְּקִדְשֵׁיךָ)—an image “suggestive of the expelled primal human as an ex-

²⁰⁸ The phrase is Waltke’s (“Psalm 15,” 18).

²⁰⁹ R.L. Cohn mentions these three examples in his chapter on mountains in the biblical cosmos (*The Shape of Sacred Space*, 33-34). These were, in turn, suggested first by S. Talmon, now found in Talmon’s “*har; gibh ‘āh*” pp 431-47 in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Vol. III, G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, eds., trans. D.E. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 441-42.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ Cf., e.g., J. Walton, “The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel and Its Implications,” *BBR* (1995) 155-75.

²¹² Interestingly, this is the same sin that brings on the deluge (cf. Gen 6.11, 13), as will be brought out in our third chapter.

communicated priest.”²¹³ In Lev 21.23, the blemished priest is denied approaching the altar lest he “profane my [YHWH’s] sanctuaries” (יִחַלֵּל אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי). As Cohn’s summary implies, the imagery of ascent to or abiding upon the sacred mount—that is, the imagery of the gate liturgy—serves as the basis for the lament:

The attempts of foreign kings to scale the mythological mountain of God meet with disastrous results. Similarly, foreign kings cannot ascend Zion, Yahweh’s chosen mountain. Only the descendant of David reigns on Zion (Ps 2.6); foreign kings flee in fright (Ps 48.5-7).²¹⁴

Finally, in the Tower of Babel narrative, the *hybris* of building what is likely intended to be understood as a ziggurat by which to ascend into heaven—for its “head/top is in the heavens” (רֹאשׁוֹ בַּשָּׁמַיִם *rō’sô baššāmayim*) (v 4)—ends with judgment and exile, a scattering over the face of the earth (v 8). These three narratives²¹⁵ involving a casting down/out of the mount of God (or a ziggurat presumably replicating it) because of sin are at least suggestive for seeking such cosmic mountain ideology—and particularly the gate liturgy aspect with its focus on the question of who may ascend—in other narratives involving mountains. These expulsions, further, echo the primal expulsion of Gen 3 as something of a “gate liturgy in reverse.”²¹⁶ God’s judgment, then, is portrayed in Scripture within a liturgical or cultic context.

To conclude, cosmic mountain ideology appears to include movement across archetypal geography, namely, that of going through the waters to the mountain, whereupon some sort of gate liturgy takes place—that is, where the question of *who* may ascend/enter is answered. As it happens, one finds this general pattern of thought in Tablet IX of *Gilgamesh*, already considered, where the hero, upon arrival at the cosmic mount Mashu, is immediately confronted by

²¹³ D.E. Callender, Jr., *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (HSS 48; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 29. Cf. S.W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 108; M. Barker, *Temple Theology*, 4; *idem.*, “Adam the High Priest in the Paradise Temple,” (2010) 6, accessed at: http://www.templestudiesgroup.com/Barker_TheParadisaicTemple.pdf.

²¹⁴ R.L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 39.

²¹⁵ All three may be considered “narratives” in as much as the prophetic oracles narrate a story.

²¹⁶ The Gen 3 expulsion narrative will be considered in the next chapter.

guardians, part scorpion, part human—precisely the sort of creatures typical of the guardian statues emplaced before temples—barring entrance through the gates of the mount. While too many lines are missing to discern whether or not there were any *leges sacrae* involved (and this is not necessarily to be expected),²¹⁷ it is, however, (1) tempting to posit some sort of entrance liturgy in the fragmented lines “I want to learn your.../ .../ I want to learn...” (67-69), or even constituting the whole conversation itself at the gate; and (2) of interest that the hero’s crossing of treacherous rivers is mentioned by the scorpion-beings at just this point. The end of their conversation resolves in Gilgamesh’s bold declaration, akin to Ps 118.19, “Now! Open the Gate!” (218), and the guardians’ acquiescence, with blessing, to allow him through “the gate of the mountain...” (224). Here we have, then, a narrative historicizing the mythopoeic drama of a Sumerian (Akkadian/Babylonian) cosmic mountain ideology. It would be surprising, given the established lexical and thematic parallels between them (and to be explored in the following chapters), if the particular cosmic mountain ideology informing Israel’s cultus were not evident in the narratives preceding those that recount the establishment of the tabernacle cultus.²¹⁸ Indeed, our point is that these narratives, the creation, deluge, and the sea crossing narratives in particular, serve to explain the need for and logic of that cultus. We hope to show, further, that the great question of the Israelite cultus, expressed in Psalms 15 and 24 as a gate liturgy—namely, “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”—runs as an undercurrent through these same narratives as an integral aspect of cosmic mountain ideology.

²¹⁷ As will be evident in the deluge chapter, where flood story parallels are briefly considered, the moral aspect of Hebrew literature is sometimes missing in ANE parallels (e.g., in the other ANE deluge stories, including *Gilgamesh*, the flood was not a punishment for sin, but appears rather to be the result of divine capriciousness).

²¹⁸ R.D. Nelson, e.g., states: “The Hebrew Bible characteristically presents the practice of sacrifice against the backdrop of Yahweh’s acts of deliverance. Those who shaped the Hebrew Bible rooted the ritual precepts of Leviticus deep into the narrative of Yahweh’s saving acts” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 99).

IV. SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTION

A. Brief Literature Review

The earliest scholarly contributions regarding the cosmic mountain come from the perspective of comparative religion, where the literature has been basic, subsuming it under the broad category of “sacred space,” and mentioning it as one of several forms of the *axis mundi* found widespread throughout the ages and cultures of the world, along with the *omphalos* and the world tree.²¹⁹

More recently there has been a proliferation of works related in a secondary fashion to the idea of the cosmic mountain, generally as a biblical-theological approach to the temple.²²⁰ While

²¹⁹ Cf., e.g., M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. W.R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, 1959); *ibid.*, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. R. Sheed (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1958); J. Campbell, *The Mythic Image* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); G. van der Leeuw, *The Meaning of Religion*, trans. J.B. Carman (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960). The *omphalos* motif was explored by various biblical scholars, e.g., H. Schmidt, *Der Heilige Fels in Jerusalem. Eine archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1933) 7ff, 33ff; B.S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament*, 83-93; S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth.”

²²⁰ Particularly in relation to the Creation account(s) of Genesis 1-3, there has been an increasing appreciation for the underlying cosmic mountain ideology at work, namely, that the cosmos is being presented as a temple with the Garden of Eden portrayed as the Holy of holies atop the mount of God. S.E. Balentine’s *The Torah’s Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), M.G. Kline’s *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006), G.K. Beale’s *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), J.V. Fesko’s *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis with the Christ of Eschatology* (Geanies House: Mentor, 2007), T.D. Alexander’s *From Eden to the New Jerusalem: An Introduction to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), J.N. Walton’s *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), along with his *NIV Application Commentary: Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), and J.L. Morrow’s “Creation and Liturgy: The Liturgical Background of Genesis 1-3” (submitted at the Trends of Ancient Jewish and Christian Mysticism Seminar at the University of Dayton, February 26, 2008 [being a revision and expansion of a portion of the work presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego, November 2007]) are examples of recent works that present something of the temple symbolism informing the Creation (and Eden) narrative, often with at least a mention of the cosmic mountain concept (usually with a reference to Ezek 28.13-14). Broadly, adherents of the Documentary Hypothesis, traditionally ascribing the Creation account to the Priestly writer (P), have also noted important connections between Genesis 1 and the cult of Israel. Notable here are the works of J. Blenkinsopp (“The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 [1976] 275-92), R.B. Cootes and D.R. Ord (*In the Beginning: Creation and the Priestly Story* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991]), P.J. Kearney (“Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25-40,” *ZAW* 89.3 [1977] 375-87), and M. Weinfeld (“Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord –the Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1.1-2.3,” pp 501-12 in *Mélanges biblique et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henrie Cazelles*, A. Caquot and M. Delcor, eds. [Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1981]). G.J. Wenham’s essay, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story” (pp 19-25 in *Proceedings of the 9th World Congress of Jewish Studies* [1986] republished in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, R.S. Hess and D.T. Tsumura, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994] pp 19-25) was one of the early studies that showed, as the title indicates, tabernacle/temple motifs in the Gen 2-3 narrative, also manifesting the ideological overlap between the so-called J and P sources. T.B. Dozeman’s book, *God on the Mountain: A Study of*

each of these works certainly makes its own particular contribution, it would yet be fair to say most of them rely upon (as this chapter already has), some merely rehearsing, the seminal studies of R.J. Clifford, J.D. Levenson, and G.A. Anderson.

In 1972 Clifford published *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*,²²¹ a revision of his 1970 doctoral dissertation at Harvard University under the supervision of F.M. Cross, Jr. Here Clifford acknowledges the need for “systematic and detailed study of the cosmic mountain and center in the great Ancient Near East religions,”²²² his own work laying the foundation for further studies. Primarily tracing the process—he dubs “translatio” (p. 131)—whereby Israel incorporated the Canaanite traditions of the cosmic mountain so that Zion, for example, became the new Zaphon, the abundant examples from Scripture amount (perhaps

Redaction, Theology and Canon in Exodus 19-24 (SBLMS 37; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), which seeks to bridge the dichotomy between traditional source criticism and biblical theology by positing a history of redaction based on canon consciousness, is important for its identification of the cosmic mountain (in this case, Sinai) with particular theologies of divine presence. Each of these works has made its own particular contribution, even if only at the level of popularizing the established parallels between the sanctuary and the Creation/Garden narratives. However, the implications of this cultic prologue for the following scriptural narratives have yet to be explored sufficiently. In relation to temple ideology/theology itself, significant contributions have from J. Lundquist (see, e.g., “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology,” pp 205-19 in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*. H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, and A.R.W. Green, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983]) and, especially, M. Barker (see, e.g., her *Temple Theology and The Gate of Heaven*).

²²¹ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*. Clifford begins the book by providing a general ancient Near Eastern background to cosmic mountain ideology (sampling in the areas of cosmological speculation and ziggurat ideology) and illustrating its significance in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and among the Hurrians and Hittites. The second chapter reviews Ugaritic literature to show the pervasiveness of cosmic mountain ideology in Canaan (a few scholars had already begun work in this area—see his short bibliography on p 4 fn 5). The third chapter considers the cosmic mountain in the Old Testament under the broad headings of Genesis, Sinai, and Zion traditions, and also explores the cosmic mountain symbolism in the Solomonic Temple. In the fourth chapter, Clifford demonstrates how the ideology of a cosmic center was continued in the intertestamental literature. Clifford summarizes the characteristics of the cosmic mountain as its being “the meeting place of the gods, the source of water and fertility, the battleground of conflicting natural forces, the meeting place of heaven and earth, the place where effective decrees are issued,” as well as being the “primal hill” where creation took place (3, 25). A mountain is cosmic in the sense that it is “involved in the government and stability of the cosmos” (*ibid*). Because of these “realities” the cosmic mountain came to symbolize the divine Presence itself, a point relevant to our thesis (6, 7). Demonstrating rather conclusively from the literature that the concept of the cosmic mountain was part of the complex of mythic or religious ideology in the ancient Near East, and that from “her earliest period as a people, around Sinai, through the time of her settled life, around Zion, sacred mountains played a significant role in Israel’s religious life” (98), Clifford’s book has become the major source for other scholarly endeavors on the topic.

²²² *Ibid.*, 2 fn 3.

necessarily) to proof-texts paralleled²²³ with Ugaritic literature in something of a history of traditions approach. Working from a source-critical perspective, Clifford's book does not deal with the final form of the text and is not an attempt at biblical theology. The tabernacle, for instance, along with the tent of meeting, is related to the tent dwelling of El in Ugaritic myths—its relationship to Sinai is not explored; the various strands of Sinai traditions are traced to the Canaanite high god El; Zion's backgrounds are traced to Baal traditions, etc. Therefore, while accomplishing much needed historical and comparative work, establishing the significant role of mountains in the religious thought of the ancient Near East via textual and archaeological evidence (glyphic and structural), Clifford does not develop the exegetical function of the cosmic mountain canonically, and does not deal with the Eden and Ararat mounts. He also unnecessarily restricts the concept of the cosmic mountain by severing it from the idea of the *Weltberg*—a position adequately critiqued by Margulis.²²⁴ By thus dislocating the cosmic mountain from a comprehensive cosmology, the pattern (particularly “through the waters”) we are seeking to establish is eluded. Temples, moreover, as architectural cosmic mounts, plainly included the primeval waters in their lore.²²⁵

²²³ Some of Clifford's parallels may not be sensitive enough to the subtle differences involved. Cf. N.M. Sarna's cautions in *Understanding Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970) xxvii.

²²⁴ B. Margulis, “Weltbaum and Weltberg,” 20ff. S.N. Kramer also supports the *Weltberg* concept in Sumerian mythology (*Sumerian Mythology* [Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 1944; rev. 1961]). As already noted, ANE cosmology need not be thought of as a naïve scientific notion but rather as a mythopoeic concept, and one arguably integral to cosmic mountain ideology. For example, Clifford's definition of the cosmic mountain includes the mount's connecting the upper and lower worlds—an idea coherent with a *Weltberg*-based cosm-/myth-ology. This is not to say that Clifford's caution against the grand synthesis approach of Eliade, van der Leeuw and others is not helpful. However, his conclusion fails to address how his own findings relate to the broader view of phenomenologists. Cf. the reviews of P.C. Craigie (*HAR* 24.4 [1973] 300-01) and G.F. Hasel (*BO* 31.1/2 [1974] 112-15).

²²⁵ See E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 48-59.

The next significant work was J.D. Levenson's introduction to the Hebrew Bible, *Sinai & Zion*, published in 1985—particularly notable as a Jewish contribution to biblical theology.²²⁶ Written at a popular level, Levenson sums up the literature of the Hebrew canon by introducing the history and religion of Israel via the symbolism of the two mountains mentioned in his title: Sinai and Zion, and positing a tension (or pluriform relationship) between their respective ideologies of nomism and kingship (or covenant and temple). Primarily focusing on the Mosaic and Davidic covenants, then, there is little to no discussion on the narratives and figures of Genesis (e.g., Adam, Noah, and Abraham). His chapter on Sinai emphasizes torah appropriately but remains imbalanced by neglecting the significance of the tabernacle cultus. Furthermore, Levenson introduces the concept of the cosmic mountain only within his consideration of Zion (p. 111ff) and the cosmic symbolism of Solomon's temple. Thus, his book is indeed “an entry into the Jewish Bible”—it neither attempts to develop cosmic mountain ideology *per se* nor exploits its hermeneutical significance outside consideration of the Davidic covenant. Our own thesis seeks to show how the cosmic mountain provides both a lens of interpretation for each particular narrative (creation, deluge, and exodus accounts) and a unifying (cultic) theology.

Closer to this goal is the work of another important scholar, G.A. Anderson, who published an article in 1988 on the cosmic mountain interpretation of Eden in early Syriac Christian literature,²²⁷ followed by an essay on early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the

²²⁶ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985). His debt to Clifford's work is evident throughout. Levenson's other works, such as his monograph on Ezekiel (*Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976]), his article, “The Temple and the World” (*Journal of Religion* 64 [1984] 275-98), and his book on divine omnipotence (*Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988]) offer brief summaries of cosmic mountain ideology, demonstrating its importance not simply for understanding the religion of Israel but for grasping the meaning of the biblical literature.

²²⁷ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain.”

Eden narrative.²²⁸ While certainly focusing upon one biblical narrative, his work is broad in scope, demonstrating the importance of cosmic mountain ideology as a basic paradigm in the thought of biblical and post-biblical literature. Reading the Eden account in terms of cosmic mountain ideology was not simply an oddity of Syriac Christianity but an attempt at reading “the biblical narratives in their own socio-cultural context,”²²⁹ the identification of the Jerusalem temple with Eden being “as old as the Bible itself.”²³⁰ Anderson thus emphasizes the importance of the cosmic mountain for understanding both the Hebrew and Christian canons.²³¹ Taking a canonical, biblical-theological approach, we will follow Anderson’s insight into the priority of the Eden narrative as displaying an archetype for the cosmic mountain (so that, for example, Moses’ ascent upon Mt. Sinai may be viewed as his being portrayed as something of a new Adam).

While several scholars have also affirmed the significance of cosmic mountain (or sanctuary) symbolism in the Eden narrative, the same work has been wanting as regards the deluge narrative—surprisingly so, given the many intertextual and thematic parallels between the two accounts. Our thesis thus hopes for a unique contribution here, in addition to deepening the understanding of cosmic mountain ideology in the creation account(s) via the cosmogonic pattern (thus incorporating the cosmic waters in a more complete cosmological approach) and the gate liturgy (exposing the cultic significance of the expulsion narrative). Given the wide consensus that temples were the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, and given the

²²⁸ G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” *Harvard Theological Review* 82.2 (1989) 121-48. We have already had occasion above to note Anderson’s just correction of Clifford’s slighting of Eden as a cosmic mountain.

²²⁹ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 190.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 203.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 212: “The use of this motif as a hermeneutical device for integrating the message of scripture is an important witness to the value of myth in the Bible itself. Curiously, modern commentators have not appreciated the *theological* value of these....” (emphasis original). We would, to avoid the confusion of an ambiguous term, replace “myth” with “mythopoeic themes” in this quote.

widespread emplacement of divine guardians at temple entrances, it is remarkable that the gate liturgy has not been incorporated into previous cosmic mountain studies as we hope to do here.

Most of the scholarship relating to the cosmic mountain, then, has been either focused on the temple themes found in the Eden narrative of Gen 2-3 or on the cosmic mountain as a broad paradigmatic concept in the biblical literature. Furthermore, previous studies on the cosmic mountain have not dealt adequately with the whole cosmological complex, including the cosmic waters. There have been, to be sure, independent studies on the cosmic waters and the river ordeal with notable contributions by H.G. May, T.S. Frymer-Kensky, and P.K. McCarter.²³²

McCarter, for example, ends his article on the “river ordeal” with the prophetic words: “In OT religion, judgment is so pervasive a factor, deliverance from waters or by crossing waters is such a central theme, that future study of the subject promises to be both complex and exciting.”²³³

Our thesis will synthesize scholarship on the cosmic waters within cosmic mountain ideology to present a more complete understanding of mythopoeic thought in the ancient Near East as particularly expressed in the Hebrew Bible. Limiting our scope by the criteria of those cosmic mountain narratives that also involve water, that is, the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) narratives, we seek to establish (1) that the pattern of going through waters → to the mountain → for worship is fundamental to biblical cosmic mountain ideology;²³⁴ (2) the concept of a “gate liturgy” is also integral to cosmic mountain ideology, serving as an exegetical key to the narratives in focus; (3) how the tabernacle cultus at the end of Exodus provides an, at

²³² H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74.1 (1955) 9-21; T.S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, vols. 1, 2 (Unpublished PhD dissertation; Yale University, 1977); P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” *HTR* 66.4 (Oct 1973) 403-12.

²³³ P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal,” 412.

²³⁴ Establishing this pattern will have ramifications, e.g., for Dozeman’s suggestion that the cosmic mountain tradition(s) of the Sinai complex (Exod 19-24) developed independently of other pentateuchal themes like the exodus. Cf. J. van Seter’s review in *JQR* 82.3-4 (1992) 583-85.

least preliminary, resolution to the exile from God's Presence in the Eden narrative, with the creation, deluge, exodus texts thus pre-figuring the tabernacle.

Finally, the aforementioned gate liturgy, applied in our thesis as a hermeneutical key to the creation, deluge, and exodus (sea crossing/Sinai) narratives, and so fundamental to the cultus of Israel, is to our knowledge almost completely lacking in previous scholarship. The sole exception is Martin R. Hauge who comes close to our reading by comparing Psalms 15 and 24 with the exodus narrative.²³⁵

Compared to the descriptions of the ideal person "who" in Psalms 15 and 24 as well as Isa 33.14-16 is fit to ascend and dwell on the holy mountain, the Sinai stories are dedicated to the question of "how" the sacred role can be actualized when the people are cast as the "who." The traditional concepts of ascent and locus are transferred from the mountain imagery to the idea of the traveling sanctuary and the people's journey together with a divine co-ascender.

Hauge recognizes the "who may ascend" motif as a structuring device and even posits Ps 24 as a version of the exodus story *in nuce*, with vv 3-6 and 7-10 corresponding to Exod 19-24 and 25-40, respectively. While our thesis will deepen and broaden Hauge's insights by illustrating the prominence of the gate liturgy motif from creation to the tabernacle, it will also fill out his work on the exodus narrative in as much as he fails to correspond the motif to the high priest's role in the tabernacle cultus, and specifically on the Day of Atonement.

B. Cosmic Mountain Ideology and Biblical Studies

Our thesis, it is hoped, will be found useful as a preliminary to a thematic approach towards a new biblical theology, incorporating and advancing upon the cultic and Presence theologies of the past.²³⁶ In the context of the biblical canon, cosmic mountain ideology will be found to be the unifying matrix of various important themes:²³⁷

²³⁵ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain: Narrative Patterns in Exodus 19-40* (JSOTSup 323; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 320.

²³⁶ The notable examples here being J. McKenzie's *A Theology of the Old Testament* (1974) and S. Terrien's *The Elusive Presence* (1978). This is not the place for us to defend particularly these two theologies as having the most potential other than to point out that to dwell in the divine Presence seems to us the bedrock theme of Scripture, with

- (1) creation (as the primal mount first to arise out of the waters of creation, making it the *omphalos*),
- (2) temple (as the pattern for which sanctuaries are the architectural replicas),
- (3) divine Presence (as archetypal geography for approaching the divine),
- (4) kingship (as the place from which the G/god and his king reigns),
- (5) covenant (as the place from which decrees are issued), and
- (6) torah/Law (again, as the place from which decrees are issued).

This fact, in as much as each of the unified strands may justly rival for biblical theological priority, is significant. For the sake of focus, our thesis will not develop the important aspects of kingship and covenant as related to the cosmic mountain,²³⁸ and, indeed, will only touch upon creation,²³⁹ temple, and Presence²⁴⁰ in an incidental fashion. To pick up on the second of the

the cultus being the ordained means of experiencing the divine Presence between the canonical bookends of creation and new creation.

²³⁷ S. Paas, e.g., writes: "It must be stressed how clearly the divine kingship, descriptions of YHWH's palace and His holy mountain in the thought of Israel were related to the faith in His creation power....As King, YHWH is the Builder of heaven and earth; as King, He is also the one who from out of His palace on Zion provides Israel with all goodness and restrains the powers of chaos. In this way, in creation Israel recognized her King and in the mighty Warrior saw her Creator" (*Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 97). The cosmic mountain is the place "on which creation began, the gateway to heaven, and the dwelling-place of the deity" (A. Spatafora, *From the "Temple of God" to God as the Temple: A Biblical Theological Study of the Temple in the Book of Revelation* [Tesi Gregoriana Serie Teologia 27; Roma: Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1997] 5).

²³⁸ While kingship and covenant will not be discussed, it should not be missed that each of these have vied for the dominant biblical theology. Cf., e.g., J. Bright, *The Kingdom of God: The Biblical Concept and Its Meaning for the Church* (1953; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981) and S.G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003) for examples of biblical theology grounded in kingship. Kingship in relation to the cosmic mountain of Zion, variously called Zion or royal ideology, would not prove a unique contribution in any case as Zion ideology is, perhaps, the thought-pattern of the Hebrew Bible most recognized by scholarship to be of a piece with the cosmic mountain idea, affirming S. Terrien's statement: "The importance of the omphalos myth for Hebrew religion cannot be underestimated. The ideology of Zion, which became central to the main form of Judaism in exilic and post-exilic times, appears to have carried with it a persistent ambivalence: on the one hand, it belonged to the archaic belief in mythical geography, which is unable to dissociate the sacred from the *topos*, and finds therein an exceptionally powerful source of religious and sociological coherence. On the other hand, it participates, through the prophetic interpretation of the Mosaic covenant, in the possibility to absorb a mythical view of space into a dynamic theology of time, based on a teleology of election, which is therefore open to religious, moral, and political transformation according to the changing conditions of history" ("The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT* 20.3 [1970] 315-24 [338]). Cf. O.P. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980) and M. Horton, *Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) for a covenantal approach. While perhaps insufficient attention has been given to Paul's correlation of covenants with mountains (see Galatians 4.24-26), covenant theology itself is also a well-furrowed field. See H. Gese's insightful discussion on the correlation of covenant and mountain, Sinai torah and Zion torah, "The Law," pp 60-92 in *Essays on Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1981).

²³⁹ We are, further, including redemption with creation as "the two pillars upon which Biblical theology rests (B. Och, "Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation," *Judaism* [1995] 226). As evident by the deluge and exodus narratives, the cosmic mountain incorporates both pillars, redemption entailing cosmogonic mimesis. Regarding creation, it has been posited that "the foundational factor in biblical theology is a creation theology" (W.J. Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation," pp 53-65 in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect*, S.J. Hafemann, ed. [Downers Grove: IVP, 2002] 65. He further states on the same page that

latter three, there has been a growing awareness in scholarship that creation is portrayed in Scripture theologically in terms of a macro-temple. As the Christian canon moves from creation to new creation, from old to new cosmic temple, with the tabernacle/temple cultus and the body of Christ/church in between, temple theology will likely prove to be *the* extensive and unifying principle of sacred writ—either subsuming the cosmic mountain or *vice versa*. The deduction from these sanctuary bookends, namely, that Scripture is primarily cultic in nature, however, has been slow to follow—even with the acknowledgment that the Pentateuch, for example, contains numerous stories reflecting points of priestly interest.²⁴¹ One scholar has thus remarked that the “priesthood has been marginalized in modern biblical studies,”²⁴² while another recently called the temple and its rituals “the great repressed of biblical studies.”²⁴³ Happily, this scene has

“redemption presupposes creation theology”). Indeed, creation theology is “the broad horizon of biblical theology” so that “all theology is creation theology” (H.H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” pp 102-17 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, B.W. Anderson, ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984] 102-3, 115). While it had once been commonplace to declare ancient Israel had no place for creation in its theology, this assertion has steadily evaporated under the beams of recent scholarship so that even salvation itself has been seen by some as subservient to creation, in effect reversing the previously dominant notion of reading the creation account in light of the exodus deliverance. For creation’s priority, see T.E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” *Int* 45.4 (1991) 359. Cf. B. Ock, “Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,” 226-27. See also T.E. Fretheim’s commentary, *Exodus* (Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), which consistently brings out the creation theology themes of the exodus, as when, e.g., he writes: “The *most basic perspective* within which the plagues are to be understood is a *theology of creation*” (106-7; emphasis original); *idem.*, “‘Because the Whole Earth is Mine’: Theme and Narrative in Exodus,” *Int* 50.3 (1996) 229-39. Previously, however, Karl Barth, e.g., had stated: “Die Existenz und das Wesen des von Gott gewollten und gesetzten Geschöpfes ist der Gegenstand und insofern die Voraussetzung seiner Liebe. So ist der Bund das Ziel der Schöpfung, die Schöpfung der Weg Zum Bunde” (*Die kirchliche Dogmatik*, III.i [Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1959] 106). Cf. also G. von Rad, “The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation,” pp 131-43 in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966); T. Boman, “The Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” *Church Quarterly Review* 165.355 (1964) 140-51; C. Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, N.E. Wagner, trans. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964) 2.

²⁴⁰ Viewing creation as a cosmic temple naturally leads one to consider further the divine Presence approached via the cult. The programmatic verses of Exodus (3.12; 19.4; 25.8) as well as the Song of the Sea (Exod 15.13, 17), summarizing as they do not merely the movement of the book of Exodus but of salvation history *in nuce*, underscore that to dwell in the divine Presence is indeed the supreme goal of *Heilsgeschichte*, the bedrock and litmus for a true biblical theology.

²⁴¹ P.J. Budd, “Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel,” *VT* 23.1 (1973) 6.

²⁴² C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” *JSHJ* 4.2 (2006) 155-75 (156).

²⁴³ M. Carden, “Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative: Rebellious Sons, Scapegoats and Boy Substitutes,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 5.1 (2009) 4.1-4.15. Wellhausen’s “brazen derision of the Priestly material” is often cited as an example of the prejudice against the cultic material in the Pentateuch, with its “post-exilic obsession with

begun to change somewhat,²⁴⁴ and our thesis, developing as it does a cultic pattern of approaching the divine Presence, the nature of man as *homo liturgicus*,²⁴⁵ that is, in his priestly role, along with the significance of the tabernacle/temple cultus in general as a narrative-shaping worldview, seeks a contribution here.²⁴⁶

cultic order and institutional religiosity” being seen as “a lamentable decline in Israelite religion from the pure faith of the prophets and the Deuteronomist” (C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1,” 156). Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 2-3; J. Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon: A Contribution to the Study of Jewish Origins* (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame Press, 1977) 18-23; R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 102-3. N.B.: The notable exception to this “repress” has been M. Barker, who has dedicated her scholarly endeavors to temple studies. Cf., e.g., her *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004); *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008); *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

²⁴⁴ One pertinent example is the renewed scholarly interest in the Book of Leviticus (cf., e.g., commentaries by G.J. Wenham, *Leviticus* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979]; M. Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1999]; J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* [New York: Doubleday, 1991], 17-22 [2000], 23-27 [2001]), highlighting the Day of Atonement as the center of the book and, indeed, of the Pentateuch with its pattern being detected even in the early narratives of Genesis. Cf. M. Carden, “Atonement Patterns,” 4.5. Cultic concerns, to be sure, are evident in the narratives preceding the Tabernacle cultus, and our thesis presumes their purpose found precisely therein, that is, to explain the significance and logic of the Tabernacle cultus. G.J. Wenham, e.g., sees “cultic and priestly concerns that run through Gen 1-8 (Sabbath, Garden of Eden//sanctuary, acceptable sacrifice [ch. 4], aversion to mixtures [6.1-4], clean/unclean, Sabbath observance earlier in the flood story)” (*Genesis 1-15* [Waco: Word, 1987] 189-90). As the temple theme has also begun to be fruitful in New Testament biblical studies, one may even hope a biblical theology of the Christian canon, based upon temple theology, soon dawns. Utilizing merely the Gospel of Mark for a few examples with regard to the New Testament, see C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2” *JSHJ* 5.1 (2007) 57-79; the following articles in *BibInt* (2007): J.B. Chance, “The Cursing of the Temple and the Tearing of the Veil in the Gospel of Mark,” 268-91; I.B. Driggers, “The Politics of Divine Presence: Temple as Locus of Conflict in the Gospel of Mark!” 227-47; D.M. Gurtner, “The Rending of the Veil and Markan Christology,” 292-306; M. Sleeman, “Mark, the Temple and Space: A Geographer’s Response,” 338-49; C. Wahlen, “The Temple in Mark and Contested Authority,” 248-67; R.E. Watts, “The Lord’s House and David’s Lord: The Psalms and Mark’s Perspective on Jesus and the Temple,” 307-22; K.J. Wendt, “Contested Temple Space and Visionary Kingdom Space in Mark 11-12,” 323-37.

²⁴⁵ The phrase “*homo liturgicus*” is used by J.L. Morrow (“Creation and Liturgy: The Liturgical Background of Genesis 1-3,” submitted at the Trends of Ancient Jewish and Christian Mysticism Seminar at the University of Dayton, February 26, 2008 [being a revision and expansion of a portion of the work presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego, November 2007] 10) who borrowed it from Scott W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 106.

²⁴⁶ Thus what Carden remarks about various narratives in Genesis, Joshua, Judges and 1 Samuel will prove equally relevant to the narratives of our thesis: “Indeed, the Temple and its rituals could be seen to be the driving object of desire of these texts, including the prophets and Deuteronomy” (“Atonement Patterns,” 4.10). Increasingly, furthermore, the liturgical character of Scripture is being appreciated—cf., e.g., S. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 101-36.

Other areas of scholarship for which our thesis may prove useful include the following: (1) studies in the cosmic symbolism of the tabernacle/temple and its rituals;²⁴⁷ (2) studies in the theology of worship; (3) studies in patriarchal religion;²⁴⁸ and (4) studies in the doctrines of baptism (i.e., through the waters) and the so-called “Fall” in systematic theology.²⁴⁹

CONCLUSION

The temple cults of the ancient Near East, including that of Israel, were informed by cosmic mountain ideology. Having reviewed the idea of the cosmic mountain in the relevant ANE and biblical literature, we turned to consider the cosmic waters as a feature integral to the overall cosmology (and cosmogony) that includes the cosmic mountain—that is, the mount rose up from the primeval waters and is surrounded by them. We also posited the judicial river ordeal as a paradigm that accords well with the cosmic mountain’s being a refuge from the waters of chaos as well as its being especially sacred—only the righteous are delivered through the waters of judgment to the mountain of the divine abode. Finally, we considered the temple entrance liturgy or gate liturgy as a cultic ritual meant to guard the sacred space of the temple from profanation by providing stipulations for entrance, expressed most obviously in the biblical literature with the question: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” (Pss 15, 24). The framing of the question itself manifests the cosmic mountain archetype informing the temple cultus.

Having examined the pattern of going through the waters to the mountain of God for worship,

²⁴⁷ R. Whitekettle, for example, has recently posited a connection between the seven and forty day periods of creation and the deluge with Levitical legislation that assumes a correspondence between the earth, the tabernacle/temple, and the womb (cf. “Levitical Thought and the Female Reproductive Cycle: Wombs, Wellsprings, and the Primeval World,” *VT* 46 [1996] 376-91). Our thesis, developing correspondences among the creation, deluge, and tabernacle narratives, contributes to this understanding.

²⁴⁸ Presuming, again, that temples are the embodiment of the cosmic mountain, then it may be the case, e.g., there is greater continuity between the religion of the patriarchs and that prescribed under Mosaic legislation—indeed, our thesis tends toward seeing the pre-tabernacle narratives as explaining the logic and need for the cultus of Israel.

²⁴⁹ As will be discussed somewhat in the next chapter, the doctrine of the Fall in systematic theology has been criticized in as much as the weight given to Gen 3 by theologians does not appear shared by the authors of the Hebrew canon. Our reading of the expulsion narrative via the gate liturgy, however, if accepted, fully justifies its prominence at the opening of the canon and within systematic theology.

along with the idea of the gate liturgy, as integral facets of biblical cosmic mountain ideology, and having considered the possible scholarly contribution of our thesis, we turn next, in the following chapters, to an analysis of the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives, respectively. Presuming cosmic mountain ideology as fundamental to an authentic reading of these narratives, we endeavor to demonstrate they serve to pre-figure the tabernacle cultus, that is, they serve to explain the logic and necessity of the cultus.

CHAPTER TWO

The Creation Account

- I. Through the Waters: Creation as Water Ordeal
 - A. God as Water-Controller
 - 1. Controlling the Waters
 - 2. The Waters of Life
 - 3. The Cosmic Waters of Eden
 - B. Creation as Earth's (and Man's) Deliverance
 - 1. Drawn out of the Waters
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- II. To the Mountain: To Dwell in the Divine Presence
 - A. The Cosmic Temple: Genesis 1
 - 1. The Ancient Near Eastern Context
 - 2. The Cosmology of Ancient Israel: God's Three-Decked House
 - 3. The Ancient Near Eastern "Kingship Pattern"
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- III. For Worship: The Liturgical *Telos* of Creation
 - A. Worship as the *Telos* of Creation
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 - B. Humanity as Priesthood/ Adam as *Homo Liturgicus*
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 - 2. To "Worship" and "Obey"
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- IV. The Tabernacle Pre-Figured (or Creation Re-Figured)
 - A. Experiencing Eden
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The Creation

INTRODUCTION

The creation account of Genesis 1.1-2.3, widely claimed to have "no superior in sublimity, force, and beauty,"¹ is neither merely the prologue to the primeval narratives and the book of Genesis, nor merely to the Torah itself, but serves as the majestic opening of both the Hebrew and the

¹ W.R. Harper, "The First Hebrew Story of Creation," *The Biblical World* 3.1 (1894) 16. Similarly, C.A. Briggs ("The Hebrew Poem of Creation," *The Old Testament Student* 3.8 [1884] 273) refers to this "first chapter of the Bible" as "one of the most precious gems of biblical literature," "a magnificent piece of literature, the grandest representation of the most important of all events." Cf. E.A. Speiser (*Genesis* [AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1964] 8) who refers to it as "a credo untinged by the least hint of speculation."

Christian canons.² By this hermeneutically significant position the creation account, including the Eden narrative of Gen 2-3,³ determines the narrative arc of the whole of Scripture. Thus, while it has become commonplace to describe the account of creation in terms of the exodus redemption⁴—and, certainly, creation and redemption are correlative throughout the Bible⁵—it will perhaps be found more in accord from a biblical theological perspective⁶ to view creation as

² G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987) 5. R.J. Clifford (“The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,” *ThS* 46 [1985]) similarly writes: “Gen 1.1-2.3 is deliberately prefatory to the whole [of chs. 2-11]. As the self-conscious beginning of the Pentateuch, the passage adumbrates the major themes to be developed in its sections. It is a preamble not only to the first major section of the Pentateuch, Gen 2.4-11.26, the origin of the nations, but also to the second section, Gen 11.27—50.24, the patriarchs of Israel, and indeed to the entire Pentateuch as a unified work. Analysis of the account shows it to be an overture” (521). Clifford further notes (*Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* [CBQMS 26; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994] 139): “Mesopotamian cosmogonies often functioned as prefaces.” Cf. also S.D. McBride Jr., “Divine Protocol: Genesis 1.1-2.3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch,” pp 3-41 in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, W.P. Brown, S.D. McBride, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); E.L. Greenstein, “Presenting Genesis 1, Constructively and Deconstructively,” *Prooftexts* 21.1 (2001) 3.

³ Justification for including Gen 2-3 will be considered below.

⁴ Cf., for example, B.W. Anderson, “The Earth is the Lord’s: An Essay on the Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” *Int* (1955) 3-20; G. von Rad, “The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrines of Creation,” *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh/London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966) 131-43; T. Boman, “The Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” *CQR* 165.355 (1964) 140-151: “If we would understand the biblical faith in creation, we must discover the centre of the Old Testament revelation out of which the belief in creation arose as its final conclusion. That centre is God’s mighty and merciful leading of the people out of Egypt through Moses, particularly the miraculous delivery of the people at the Red Sea” (141); T. Boman, “The Biblical Doctrine of Creation,” writes that the “centre of Old Testament religion and the source of the creation idea is the miraculous event at the Red Sea” (151). Boman further states: “There you have creation as the last and the most comprehensive consequence of the revelation of Yahweh’s might power over nature revealed at the Red Sea” (142); “We see that create and redeem, Creator and Savior, are synonyms, because both have their root and origin in the wonderful event at the Red Sea” (144); C. Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, trans N.E. Wagner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964) 2: “Actually the Bible does not begin with Genesis 1 but with Exodus 1.” For a brief review of the debate about the place of creation in biblical theology, cf. the preface of *God Who Creates*, xi-xvii; and for a brief survey of contemporary scholarship, cf. S. Paas, *Creation & Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 1-20.

⁵ “Creation and redemption belong together, as the obverse and reverse of the same theological coin,” (B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” pp. 1-24 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. B.W. Anderson [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984] 6).

⁶ T.E. Fretheim has been especially instrumental in emphasizing the priority of Creation theology. See his “The Reclamation of Creation: Redemption and Law in Exodus,” *Int* 45.4 (1991) 354-65. Cf. H.H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology,” pp 102-117 in *Creation in the Old Testament* (originally published in *ZTK* 70 [1973] 1-19) who claims that “[a]ll theology is creation theology” (115); S. Paas *Creation and Judgment*, 1-107 W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation,” pp 53-65 in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect*, S.J. Hafemann, ed. (Downers Grove, IVP, 2002) 65: “we must conclude that the foundational factor in biblical theology is a creation theology.” Certainly, the new exodus of redemption in the Scriptures is often described in creational terms (e.g., Isa 9.2; 2 Cor 4.6).

the kernel of redemption. That is, beyond recalling the exodus, the creation account itself serves to interpret the exodus experience in terms of creation.⁷

Given, however, the significant canonical and theological place of the creation account(s), the perceived marginalization particularly of Gen 3 throughout the rest of Scripture is somewhat surprising—especially so the later one posits a final redaction of the material. Some scholars have claimed the so-called “Fall” narrative is neither referenced nor alluded to throughout the Old Testament and that, therefore, the traditional theological interpretation does violence to the text. James Barr, for example, writes: “OT scholars have known that the reading of the story as the ‘Fall of Man’ in the traditional sense, though hallowed by St. Paul’s use of it, cannot stand up to examination through a close reading of the text.”⁸ Brueggemann, who considers this narrative the most misunderstood of the entire Bible, states:

It has been assumed that this is a decisive text for the Bible and that it states the premise for all that follows. In fact, this is an exceedingly marginal text. No clear subsequent reference to it is made in the Old Testament, though there are perhaps links in Ezek 28. And even in the New Testament the linkage developed in the Augustinian tradition of anthropology is based on the argument of Paul in the early chapters of Romans. Even Paul does not make general appeal to this text. ...The text is commonly treated as the account of “*the fall*.” Nothing could be more remote from the narrative itself.⁹

Westermann, as well, believes the traditional interpretation to be “inaccurate and deceptive,” positing that the narrative intention lies rather in answering the existential (not causal) “question

⁷ B. Och, “Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,” *Judaism* (Spring 1995) 226-27: “the creation motif...is the fundamental theme which underlies the Biblical text, providing it with meaning and substance...The very fact that the Bible begins with Genesis is, in my opinion, a literary fact of considerable theological significance. Scripture opens with a theology of creation and thereby provides a universal context for determining the meaning of everything that transpires in the entire Biblical narrative. The opening chapters of Genesis provide a protology for the history of Israel....Accordingly, Exodus is to be understood in light of Genesis, redemption and covenant as part of the unfolding drama of Divine creation.” Och goes on to quote Ludwig Köhler (*Theologie des Alten Testaments* [Tübingen, 1936] 70): “The Old Testament history of creation does not answer the question ‘How did the world come into being?’ with the answer: ‘God created it,’ but answers the question ‘From where does the history of God’s people derive its meaning?’ with the answer: ‘God has given the history of His people its meaning through creation.’ In other words, creation in the Old Testament does not belong to the sphere of natural science but to the history of man” (227). Cf. also H.H. Schmid, “Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation.”

⁸ J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) ix.

⁹ W. Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982) 41.

of human beings affected by their limited state.”¹⁰ In a more recent work, G.A. Anderson underscores the issue:

Since the rise of modern biblical studies in the early part of the eighteenth century more than a modicum of doubt has been cast on the standard Christian understanding of that story as “the Fall.” If the transgression of Adam really does usher in the reign of sin and death from which the rest of the biblical odyssey will seek redress, why is Adam’s sin and its consequences *never* mentioned until the writings of Paul? Could the story really have such intrinsic significance and yet be completely ignored by the rest of the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus? The problem is a real and profound one and must be addressed.¹¹

The question here, once more, is whether the canonical and theological place of the narrative is justified when it appears the Old Testament (i.e., the history of Israel’s religion) does not, by way of intertextuality, allusion, etc., accord Gen 3 such significance.¹² Does this account really “have such intrinsic significance”? Is it really “completely ignored” by the rest of the Old Testament? Is it not, finally, a “decisive text,” stating “the premise for all that follows”? This problem is, indeed, real—and likely compounded by the reticence to consider Gen 1-3 as a whole. Yet when one approaches the narratives through the lens of cosmic mountain ideology (and, thus, within a cultic context), the “upshot” is found precisely here: (1) Gen 1 and 2-3 are found to cohere more smoothly, and (2) the underlying prominence of Gen 3 throughout the Hebrew Bible becomes more discernible—the canonical logic, that is, becomes manifest. Gen 3, we will argue, establishes the “descent” that generates the question of ascent so central to the cultus of Israel (cf. Pss 15, 24), and the narratives of our thesis. Thus, entirely aside from whether or not the rest of the canon contains allusions to the Fall narrative,¹³ a cultic reading of the text manifests the

¹⁰ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 276-77.

¹¹ G.A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 197-98.

¹² See brief discussion in R.W.L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 71ff; T.E. Fretheim, “Is Genesis 3 a Fall Story?” *Word & World* 14.2 (1994) 144-53. While Fretheim defends a more traditional reading of Gen 3 his summation states: “However generalizable the story in chapter 3, it alone cannot carry the weight and freight of the traditional view; the fall is finally not understood to be the product of a single act.”

¹³ While “Eden” is mentioned several times (even within Genesis itself), an allusion precisely to the Fall narrative seems beyond dispute in Ezek 28.1-19. Cf. Gen 13.10; Isa 51.3; Ezek 31.15-18.

canonical structure's weight: the narrative and theology of the rest of the Hebrew Bible (and perhaps of the Christian canon as well) is founded firmly upon the opening narrative(s) of Genesis.

To summarize now this chapter's approach: while the argument has already been made that the cosmic mountain forms a conceptual backdrop to ANE literature, including that of Israel, it may also be the case that the creation account(s) of Gen 1-3 function to establish the cosmic mountain paradigm fundamental to Israel's tabernacle/temple cultus. For example, v 2 of Gen 1 may be read as key to understanding the nature of the waters surrounding the cosmic mountain, through which one crosses to approach the divine abode. God's division of those waters may also be understood as determinative for his judicial role in relation to them. The abundant life in the divine Presence narrated in Gen 2 would explain humanity's need to approach the mount of God, and the expulsion narrative of Gen 3 to justify the tabernacle cultus as the divinely revealed means for that approach. In other words, Israel's cosmic mountain ideology may be rooted in the opening of its canon. Accordingly, this chapter will outline our study of Gen 1-3 according to the unifying pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, a cosmogonic pattern that will be repeated in both the deluge and exodus deliverances (and so portraying them symbolically as "new creations").¹⁴ Via cosmic mountain ideology, we will consider (1) the creation waters as an ordeal, (2) the sanctuary symbolism in the creation account(s), and (3) worship as the *telos* of creation, including how the expulsion narrative determines—that is, comprises the backdrop to—the gate liturgy. This latter point, so we hope to

¹⁴ To anticipate somewhat the byproduct of the thesis, though not of this particular chapter, the cultic pattern in the deluge narrative parallels Gen 1-3 *as a whole*: Gen 7.24 describes the waters as having prevailed over the earth, akin to the condition of the earth described in Gen 1.2a. In Gen 8.1, God sends a "wind" to draw back the waters, paralleling Gen 1.2c. As the narrative proceeds through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, we find Noah, like a new Adam, atop an Ararat mount with (presumably peaceful) animals, receiving the blessing to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth (Gen 8-9). Gen 9.18-29 then recounts something of the "fall" of Noah. The same may be said for the exodus narrative and the apostasy/fall of the golden calf incident; and in relation to Israel's entry and expulsion from Canaan. This pattern itself then serves to manifest the underlying unity of Gen 1-3.

demonstrate, will serve to satisfy the theological weight given the so-called “Fall” narrative, questioned and critiqued via the rise of modern biblical scholarship. The creation account(s) will be found all the more significant, therefore, when understood as prefiguring the tabernacle/temple cultus, functioning to explain its logic and necessity.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: THE CREATION AS WATER ORDEAL

The three disjunctive clauses of Gen 1.2 emphasize that the primordial¹⁵ waters of the deep prevailed over the earth/land, making it a “weltering wasteland.”¹⁶ The significance of this brief portrayal of the pre-fashioned cosmos for the rest of Scripture has been rarely appreciated. Indeed, that emphasis is stark enough to serve as the foil¹⁷ for the six days of creation (vv 3-31), counterbalanced by the three-fold description of God’s rest upon completing the heavens and earth (2.1-3). Westermann rightly notes, in this regard, that if one were to look for any dramatic tension in the narrative “it would be in 1.2 and its link with the preceding or following verses, that is, either in the transition from 1.2 to 1.3 or from 1.1 to 1.2f. This is the only place in Gen 1 where there could be any sort of dramatic element.”¹⁸ That the deluged earth of v 2 could not sustain life links deliverance to creation,¹⁹ with fruition of life as a point of resolution—a resolution tied thematically to the waters. In the sense that the earth was “delivered” from the primeval waters, we may describe that deliverance in terms of a water ordeal. Under this general

¹⁵ Quite apart from any Mesopotamian influence, “the Hebrew and Akkadian terms refer to the ‘primeval water’” (D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,” pp. 27-57 in *Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994] 31).

¹⁶ My own translation of תהו ובהו. Cf. E. Fox’s “wild and waste” (*The Five Books of Moses* [Schocken Bible: vol. 1; New York: Schocken Books, 1995] 13); R. Alter’s “welter and waste” (*The Five Books of Moses* [New York: Norton, 2004] 17).

¹⁷ “A foil is literally something that sets off or heightens an element in the story. Usually this heightening consists of a contrast, but sometimes it is a parallel,” (L. Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 2d ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992] 70).

¹⁸ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: Continental Commentary*, J.J. Scullion, trans. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 80.

¹⁹ Cf. B.K. Waltke (with C. Yu), *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: 2007) 181; G.W. Coats (“Strife and Broken Intimacy: Genesis 1-3: Prolegomena to a Biblical Theology,” pp. 151-69 in *The Moses Tradition* [JSOTSup 161; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 153): “It is important to note that salvation history is rooted in the creation of the world. The first act of redemption for the people of the world is the creation of the world itself....” Salvation is, thus, an act of creation.

heading, we will now consider God's role in creation as water-controller and how, via that control, the earth's creation is portrayed as being delivered from the waters.

A. God as Water-Controller

1. CONTROLLING THE WATERS

The Creation account contains a strong motif of water, a motif not without parallels in the ancient Near East.²⁰ Water is commonly conceived as a symbol of the oppositional forces of life, an "ambiguous symbol of life *and* death."²¹ Bechtel correctly identifies "control" as the fulcrum of this ambiguity: "Water is symbolic of death, when it is uncontrolled (too much or too little), and life, when it is controlled, because it produces growth and fertility."²² This statement, in fact, summarizes the movement from Gen 1.2 → 2.10-14, from the chaotic waters of the dark abyss to the fructifying rivers of Eden.²³ In the Hebrew Bible, this decisive control is the prerogative of God, a manifestation of his sovereignty.²⁴ Through his command and "control" of

²⁰ Appearing in Canaanite, Egyptian, Anatolian, and Greek myths. Cf. D.T. Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood," 33; J.H. Walton, "Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East: Order out of Disorder after Chaotikampf," *CTJ* 43 (2008) 57.

²¹ J.S. Ackerman, "The Literary Context of the Moses Birth Story (Exodus 1-2)," *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*, K.R.R. Gros Louis et. al., eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974) 90 (emphasis original). Cf. also M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, R. Sheed, trans. (1958; Lincoln: Bison Books, 1996) 188-215; P.S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002) 123: "Though a source of life and blessing, [water] is also a source of death and destruction. It is a force of chaos opposed to Yahweh, and is found under the earth, though its geographical relationship to the underworld is never clearly defined."

²² L.M. Bechtel, "Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-4.24," pp 77-117 in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, A. Brenner, ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 95. Tsumura, also, opens his study on creation by noting the significance of control with respect to water's symbolism: "In human experience, water occupies a crucial place, both positive and negative. Water is one of the basic necessities for the existence of living things and is thus beneficial when controlled properly; however, it can be destructive when uncontrolled" (D.T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005] 1). Cf. also *TDOT* VIII.282-3; R.J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 144.

²³ Cf. also Isa 8.5-8 for God's waters of blessing versus his floodwaters of judgment.

²⁴ Ross traces scriptural mythopoeic language to this end: "The sea was considered a force of chaos, one that the pagans explained with gods or monsters and a cosmogonic battle. The Hebrew poets used some of their designations to teach that the LORD controlled these "seas" (Pss 74.12-17; 89.9-11; Isa 51.9-11)" (A.P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005] 85 fn 10). O. Keel, referencing the ancient Near Eastern query regarding what kept the earth from sinking into the chaotic waters, states that in the OT, the "crucial factor is that Yahweh, a personal power, keeps the earth out of the Chaos-waters (Pss

water, YHWH shows himself sovereign over life. Indeed, the incipient source of this idea may be traced to the parallelism of v 2:

וַחֲשֹׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם
וַרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם

Here “watery abyss” (תְהוֹם *t’hôm*) and “the waters” (הַמָּיִם *hammāyim*) stand in parallel,²⁵ with תְהוֹם likely signifying the negative or threatening aspect of water and הַמָּיִם representing the positive aspect of water under control. One common view regarding תְהוֹם is that it

appears not to have lost entirely all vestiges of its mythological character as a cosmic power, although it is no longer vested with the personal qualities of will and intelligence which appear in the Babylonian Tiamat. The Hebrew *t’hôm* displays features of power and cosmic range capable of disrupting the divinely given order of creation (cf. Ps 104.7-9) without the waters themselves threatening to overwhelm God.²⁶

24.1-2; 93.1; 96.10; 136.6)” (*The Symbolism in the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of the Psalms* [New York: Seabury Press, 1978] 40). Cf. also J.H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 113; M.K. Wakeman, *God’s Battle with the Monster* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 61, 79. See 133f for the “confinement of the sea.” For Leviathan as a symbol, see C.H. Gordon, “Leviathan: Symbol of Evil,” pp 1-9 in *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, A. Altman, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966). If Matthews is correct that the “proper context for understanding the ‘deep’ for its religious significance is the historical experiences of the Mosaic community where it confronted the waters,” the dual symbol holds, for the “‘deep’ (and ‘waters’) often is portrayed as a threat to life and to the people of God,” yet Yahweh often employs the waters “to achieve his salvific ends for his people” (K.A Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26* [NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996] 133-34).

²⁵ G. Wenham notes: “‘deep’ and ‘waters’ are virtually synonymous here” (*Genesis 1-15*, 17). Verse 2 is, however, an illustration of how poetic features defy simple categories. The terms “deep” and “waters” are synonymous in that they reference a single object. But the terms themselves poetically convey different, perhaps even contrasting (though not antithetical), perspectives. My argument is for v 2 as a contrastive-synonymous parallelism or what M. DeRoche refers to as “simultaneity not synonymity” (“The *Ruah Elohim* in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?” pp 303-18 in *Ascribe to the LORD: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, L. Eslinger, G. Taylor, eds. [JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988] 315 fn 26). Pace T.A. Perry (“A Poetics of Absence: The Structure and Meaning of Genesis 1.2,” *JSOT* [1993] 3-11) who suggests “the deep” refers to the heavens so that there is no synonymy. Cf. N. Wyatt (“The Darkness of Genesis 1.2,” pp 92-101 in *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* [London: Equinox, 2005] 95f; first published in *VT* 43 [1993] 546-52) who takes “darkness” and “spirit of God” as a synonymous rather than contrasting pair, noting that darkness is often the language used of theophany (Ps 18.12; 2 Sam 22.12; Deut 4.11; 5.23).

²⁶ *TDOT* VIII.275. U. Cassuto points out that, given the assumed parallelism between “deep” and “waters,” the Deep is to be identified with the primeval World-Ocean, though only as purely physical concept (*A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part I: From Adam to Noah*, Abrahams, trans. [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961] 22, 24). Cf. G.F. Hasel, “The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AUSS* 10 (1970) 4-7; *Idem.*, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EQ* 46.2 (1974) 81-102 (particularly 82-85) for the use of *t’hôm* in Gen 1 as an “antimythical polemic.” B.K. Waltke also characterizes Gen 1 in general as polemic (“The Creation Account in Genesis 1.1-3, Part IV: The Theology of Genesis 1,” *BibSac* 132 [1975] 327-42); B. Vawter, “A Note On ‘The Waters Beneath the Earth,’” *CBQ* 22.1 (1960) 71-73; A.S. Kapelrud, “The Mythological Features in Genesis Chapter I and the Author’s Intentions,” *VT* 24.2 (1974) 178-86.

Landes, who does not find any pejorative connotations with respect to תְּהוֹם, yet finds a “hint of a possible negative note” in the presence of the רוּחַ אֲלֵהֶם, “soaring” or “hovering,” possibly suggesting the hostility of a hawk circling its prey, which motif, he notes, “fits well with those Old Testament passages where Yahweh is depicted as entering into combat with the mighty waters, often personified as Rahab or Leviathan.”²⁷ For our purpose, however, his conclusion, highlighting YHWH’s control over the waters, is to the point:

Is Gen 1.2 intentionally alluding to the motif of God’s conflict with the rebellious waters, or is the idea simply of God’s control and authority over the waters for the purpose of utilizing them in creation? Since we perceive no other clues to suggest the writer may have had in mind the more violent conceptuality, it is perhaps better to adhere to the second interpretation—that is, God’s moving above the waters in the power of his direction and ordering. Significantly, quite in contrast with the Babylonian conception, where Ti’amat is slain and annihilated before the cosmos is created, the biblical picture never portrays the destruction of the waters or of *thwm*, but only their control and ordering by Yahweh *within* the created cosmos, which, interestingly, is in keeping with Egyptian creation tradition.²⁸

Verse 2b, further, conjoins the תְּהוֹם with “darkness” (חֹשֶׁךְ *hōšek*). Certainly, an “Israelite thought nothing, not even evil and darkness, could be removed from the dominion of Yahweh”²⁹—and this, it will be argued below, is the theological implication of v 2c, yet the point here is simply that the darkness of 2b *is* to be viewed negatively, especially when considering its symbolism throughout Scripture (and particularly in relation to humanity).³⁰ Turning now to 2c,

²⁷ G.M. Landes, “Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8.22-31 and Genesis 1,” pp 279-93 in *A Light Unto My Path: OT Studies in Honor of Jacob M. Myers*, H.N. Bream, R.D. Heim, C.A. Moore, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple U Press, 1974) 286; B. Vawter, “A Note On ‘The Waters Beneath.’”

²⁸ G.M. Landes, “Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8.22-31 and Genesis 1,” 286-87.

²⁹ J.L. McKenzie, *Second Isaiah* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1968) 77.

³⁰ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 16. Matthews (*Genesis 1-11:26*, 132-33), viewing v 2 as the material result of v 1 (and so a description of the earth in its “pristine state”), is therefore reluctant to view “darkness” negatively, and bases his argument on God’s “demonstrating authority over” darkness by naming it. Conceding his points, however, would mean that even “evil” ceases to be evil—for even evil is never a threat to God’s sovereignty. Thus God’s demonstrating authority over the darkness is not at issue, but rather whether or not the darkness is a threat to *us*, jeopardizing *our* life: “The earth is a dark abyss, inhospitable to life. ‘Darkness’ and ‘deep,’ as opposites of ‘light’ and ‘land,’ connote surd evil (Ex 15.8; Prov 2.13). They too become part of God’s creation, doing his will (see Gen 45.5-7)” (B.K. Waltke [with C.J. Fredericks], *Genesis: A Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001] 60) and are thus called good only after God has so controlled them for our good. Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 104; U. Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 26. This is in keeping with the basic role of darkness/night as a motif of danger in biblical narrative. Cf. W.W. Fields, “The Motif ‘Night as Danger’ Associated with Three Biblical Destruction Narratives,” pp 17-32 in *“Sha’arei Talmon”: Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*, M. Fishbane, E. Tov, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992). While Fields deals primarily with

while *mayim rabbim* may also be destructive in Scripture, most often the “uncontrolled” aspect is brought out by the use of the attributive adjective “great” or “many,” in the compound term *mayim rabbim* (cf. 2Sam 22.17; Ps 32.6; 93.4; Isa 17.12; Jer 51.55). Even “death itself could be viewed as a journey through the *mayim rabbim* to *Sheol* (Lam 3.54). There thus developed a close association between the threatening power of water, especially in its cosmic manifestation as *mayim rabbim*, and the physical fact of death (cf. Ps 124.5; 144.7; also Ps 18.17[16]; 69.3, 15f. [2,14f]; Isa 43.2).³¹ In this formulation, *mayim rabbim* can be in synonymous parallelism with *qetum* as in Ezek 26.19 and 31.15.³²

בְּהַעֲלוֹת עָלַיךְ אֶת־תְּהוֹם
וּכְסוּף הַמָּיִם הַרְבִּיִּם

כִּסְתִּי עָלַי אֶת־תְּהוֹם
וְאֶמְנַע נִהְרֹתֶיהָ וַיִּקְלְאוּ מַיִם רַבִּים

Herbert G. May, in his study “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, ‘Many Waters,’” states:

The dragon is the sea and the sea is frequently designated in contexts such as this by the expression *mayim rabbim*, ‘many waters.’ The ‘many waters’ are the chaotic, disorderly, insurgent elements which must be *controlled*....An analysis of certain passages in which the expression “many waters” occurs will demonstrate how the writers use it to indicate the cosmic insurgent elements which may be manifest as the enemies of Yahweh, as the enemies of Israel, or as the enemy afflicting the faithful individual. And whether in the past, present, or future, the struggle is essentially one, the battle of God against the waters which threaten his rule. And after the conflict he sits enthroned above the waters....In [Ezek] 26.19 Yahweh will make Tyre a city laid waste; he will bring over it the deep (*ṭhôm*), and “many waters” will cover it. The parallelism between “many waters” and “*ṭhôm*” suggests this is not a simple image of the waters of the Mediterranean

“destruction” narratives, examples may be offered outside this category, e.g., Jacob’s wrestling (Gen 32.22-32), the Passover/exodus (Exod 12-14). These narratives present something of a rebirth/creation out of the dark threat of destruction/death.

³¹ *TDOT* VIII.275. Further, “the presence of the water in the seas represents a basic feature of the order of creation (Gen 1.10; Hab 3.15), indicating that water itself was looked upon as a supra-mundane aspect of reality. As *mayim rabbim* it possessed the power to confer life, yet it was also regarded as a threatening power of chaos which could bring death, and could even threaten to disrupt or even overthrow the order divinely determined for creation (cf. Ps 104.5-9)...The concept of the primeval ocean in the guise of “mighty waters” (*mayim rabbim*) is widely attested in the OT. At several points it retains marked overtones of its significance as a destructive cosmic power” (270, 283). Cf. L.I.J. Stadelmann’s discussion, *The Hebrew Conception of the World* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970) 165-76.

³² Cf. Jon 2.6, however, where *mayim* is in parallel to *ṭhôm* as the “waters” surround Jonah even to his soul, i.e. they are uncontrolled.

swallowing the island of Tyre, although this may be involved....Yahweh makes the “many waters,” the deep, his agent of destruction, as he did at the time of the flood.³³

Stadelmann makes a similar observation:

Taken together, the two passages [Pss 93.3-4, 107.23-24] just given refer to large sheets of water. The expression *mym rbym* represents the unruly waters of the deep and elsewhere these waters are a symbol of threatening danger [2 Sam 22.17; Isa 17.13; Jer 51.55; Ezek 31.15; Hab 3.15; Ps 18.17; 29.3; 32.6; 77.20; 144.7]. This undoubtedly was the reason why the ocean was associated with the nether world....³⁴

Because the context of “primordial” waters in v 2 would make מַיִם רַבִּים a preferable choice, it is possible, then, that מַיִם was chosen particularly to contrast תְּהוֹם. This contrasting nature of the parallelism is more convincing when the other terms in parallel are considered, namely, רוּחַ and רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים. “The antithetic concept is clearly indicated,” states Ouro, “by the opposite or contrasting pair of words *hōšek* ‘darkness’ \ *rûah* *lōhîm* ‘Spirit of God.’”³⁵ We take, then, the *wāw* of וְרוּחַ as having an adversative sense.³⁶ By parallel to the deluge narrative whereby, after the cosmos had returned to the watery abyss of Gen 1.2a-b, the structural and thematic turning point hinges upon God’s sending a “wind,” the adversative sense of וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים would appear firmly established. The precise nature of רִיחַ is not critical to the point as the רִיחַ in view is expressly that of אֱלֹהִים (“God”).³⁷ Either “Spirit” or “Wind” of God, both—particularly in light

³³ H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74.1 (Mar 1955) 9-21 (10, 12, 18). He further notes (12): “The term ‘many waters’ is used with a number of meanings. It may at times mean little more than abundant waters, although it may be implied that such abundant waters have their source in the great deep, the *ṭhôm* ... But in the passages to be considered there are references, more or less explicit, to the insurgent waters.” May’s article demonstrates a consistent understanding of *mayim rabbîm* as “hostile and insurgent” waters.

³⁴ L.I.J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World*, 160. He notes in fn 844 of 160 his preference to “translate *mym rbym* as ‘great waters,’ on account of the insurgent-waters symbolism designated by this expression which reflects Ugaritic background. Ug. *rb*, when used as an adjective, means ‘great.’”

³⁵ R. Ouro, “The Earth of Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part I,” *AUSS* 35.2 (Autumn 1998) 263 (// standing for antithetic parallelism). Cf. also R.J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 142.

³⁶ U. Cassuto, *Genesis* I, 24; W. Hildebrandt, *An OT Theology of the Spirit of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 32-33. Again, cf. N. Wyatt (“The Darkness of Genesis 1.2,” 95f) for the view that “darkness” and “spirit of God” are synonymous rather than contrasting.

³⁷ Some propose the translation “mighty wind,” cf. J.N.P. Smith, “The Syntax and Meaning of Genesis 1:1-3,” *AJSL* 44 (1927-28) 111-14; *Idem.*, “The Use of Divine Names as Superlatives,” *AJSL* 45 (1928-29) 212-20. Against the translation “mighty/terrible wind,” with *lōhîm* taken as a superlative, cf. V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chs 1-17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 111-15; Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 135; D.W. Thomas, “A

of the role of the רִיחַ in the deluge and in the sea crossing—express God’s control over the waters.³⁸ Indeed, it seems likely that a double-entendre is in view, even that “Wind of God” may be utilized, as in Wenham’s translation, for “a concrete and vivid image of the Spirit of God.”³⁹ Examining parallel texts of the Old Testament, Moscati⁴⁰ marks the significance of the Spirit’s role in creation, supporting precisely this understanding for 2c:

You send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the earth. (Ps 104.30)

If he should set his heart on it, if he should gather to himself his Spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. (Job 34.14-15)

Consideration of Some Unusual Ways of Expressing the Superlative in Hebrew,” *VT* 3 (1954) 209-24; E.J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1999) 36-42. Common arguments for the interpretation “God” include: (1) the use of *ʾlōhîm* as “God” in the preceding and following vv 1, 3; (2) the recurring use (35x) in Gen 1 of *ʾlōhîm* specifically for the divine name; (3) None of the other eighteen occurrences of *rûaḥ ʾlōhîm* can be translated “mighty wind,” with the next usage of *rûaḥ ʾlōhîm* in Ex 31.3 expressly meaning “Spirit of God”—and here with a parallel context (constructing the tabernacle = creation); (4) the participle *mʾraḥpet* is personification for a leader or protector; (5) Biblical Hebrew has other preferable expressions for “mighty wind,” such as *rûaḥ sʾārā* (Ps 106[107].25; cf. 148.8) or *rûaḥ gʾdōlā* (1K 19.11; Job 1.19; Jon 1.4). In any case, S. Moscati urges that even in the elative, *ʾlōhîm* “does not exclude the Divinity” (“The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,” *JBL* 66.3 [1947] 306), and further states: “The presence here affirmed of a personal *elohîm* in the primordial chaotic state of the universe shows clearly the autonomy of Hebrew thought. It revivifies and transfuses in a monotheistic and transcendent sense, the elements of a pagan and natural cosmogony, based upon the apparent aspect of the universe, which were parts of the traditional heritage of the Semites and in general of the ancient Near East. So, if there was an old *rûaḥ*, meaning both wind and spirit in the etymology of the word, it has become in Genesis *rûaḥ elohîm*, an indissociable element of the transcendent Creator, the immaterial and active principle of physical life” (309).

³⁸ Cf. R. Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93 (1981) 1-10 (2, 6): “Yahweh’s ability to contain and dominate the cosmic waters, the forces of chaos, is the absolute prerequisite and surest sign of his divine kingship. Normally, furthermore, his authority is expressed through the presence of his *rûaḥ*, variously translated as his breath, voice, or (as in the cases of Noah and Gen 1.2) wind. ... We discover, then, that the wind can either dry up or stir up. Subdue or agitate at Yahweh’s command. It is, as it were, the instrument by which his will, whatever it may be, is executed.” For the role of wind in cosmogonies, cf. S. Moscati, “The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,” 305-10. However, “Spirit” may be, if accepted, the more obviously contrastive: “But if the phrase רִיחַ אֱלֹהִים is understood as referring to ‘the spirit of God’ then it [the parallelism of 2b and c] must be understood as a contrast” (Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 106). Cf. also K. Smoronski, “Et spiritus Dei ferebatur supra aquas,” *Bib* 6 (1925) 140-56, 275-93, 361-95; W.H. McClellan, “The Meaning of *rûaḥ ʾlōhîm* in Gen 1.2,” *Bib* 15 (1934) 517-27; U. Cassuto, “La creazione del mondo nella Genesi,” *Annuario di studi ebraici* I (1935) 18-20; H.M. Orlinsky, “The Plain Meaning of *rûaḥ* in Gen 1.2,” *JQR* 48.2 (1957) 14-82.

³⁹ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 17. Similarly, K.A. Matthews (*Genesis 1-11:26*, 135-36) writes: “Yet the Mosaic community may have understood *rûaḥ* as having a double sense, ‘wind’ as the prototype of the ‘Spirit’ because of Israel’s experience at the Red Sea, where God sent a mighty ‘wind’ to part the waters and deliver Israel from the Egyptians.... Whether it is understood as ‘wind’ or ‘Spirit,’ the Hebrews could well appreciate the theology: God was sovereignly superintending the condition of the earth and preparing the way for his creative word. The divine superintendence may be likened to an eagle “hovering” (*rāḥap*) over the earth.” R. Ouro also makes a strong case for the translation “Spirit of God” (“The Earth in Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part III,” *AUSS* 38.1 [2000] 59-67).

⁴⁰ S. Moscati, “The Wind in Biblical and Phoenician Cosmogony,” 308-09.

Also relevant here, especially given other correspondences (to be developed below), is the role of God's Spirit/Wind in the construction of the tabernacle.⁴¹

To summarize, while clauses 2b and c are in parallel with the phrases *עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם* and *עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם* referring to the same phenomenon, yet from the perspective of *חֹשֶׁךְ* the waters are *תְהוֹם*, a dark watery abyss of death; but with the *controlling* presence⁴² of the *רוּחַ* of God, the waters are *הַמַּיִם*—the imagery develops with the potential for deliverance and life. The control of *אֱלֹהִים* over the waters is made explicit with the ensuing narrative, specifically in the acts of dividing or separating (*בָּדַל*), perhaps the fundamental feature of Israelite cosmology (cf. Gen 1.6; Ex 20.4; Dt 5.8; Ps 104.3; 136.6; 148.4).⁴³ Moreover, the depiction of that control is consistently over *הַמַּיִם*, e.g., v 6b: *וַיְהִי מִבְּדִיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם*. Thus, once the narrative proper begins (v 3), with *אֱלֹהִים* exerting his control, there is no more mention of *תְהוֹם*.⁴⁴ The portrait here of divine “water wielder” is coherent, further, with that of Gen 2, where God is identified as “the causer of rain,” who “is in charge of the rain.”⁴⁵ Such an idea, God as “water-controller,” has

⁴¹ B.K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 182-83: “Ancient Near Eastern parallels and early Judaic sources suggest the building of the tabernacle reprises the creation of the cosmos. In that reprise Bezalel is filled with the “spirit of God” (*rûah ʾlōhîm*) for the purpose of endowing him with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge for his constructive work (Exod 31.3). In other words, *rûah ʾlōhîm* has a positive theological significance over against primordial darkness and abyss.” V.P. Hamilton (*Genesis 1-17*, 112) concurs: “It is most unlikely, therefore, that the phrase [*רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים*] be read negatively in Gen. 1 and positively in Exod. 31.”

⁴² Cf., e.g., V.P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 115.

⁴³ *TDOT* VIII.275. In Psalm 74, interestingly, “the dividing of the sea (the Red Sea deliverance?), is the breaking of the heads of dragons and the defeat of the Leviathan” (H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” 13). The creation of heaven and earth by division is common to all ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies. Cf. G.F. Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” 87.

⁴⁴ M. DeRoche states that *רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים* “expresses Elohîm’s *control* over the cosmos and his ability to impose his will upon it. As part of v 2 it is part of the description of the way things were before Elohîm executes any specific act of creation” (“The *Ruah Elohîm* in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?” 318, emphasis added). Cf. also G.F. Hasel, “The Significance of the Cosmology in Genesis 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” 8-9.

⁴⁵ B.J. Stratton, *Out of Eden: Reading, Rhetoric and Ideology in Genesis 2-3* (JSOTSup 208; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 31, 65.

parallels in the ancient Near East.⁴⁶ Especially when contrasted with Egyptian theology, God's control over the primeval chaotic waters appears precisely at point in Gen 1,⁴⁷ this control of the waters being peculiar to *Enuma elish* and Genesis.⁴⁸ Furthermore, divinely controlled water is an essential element of the judicial river ordeal, allowing its verdict to be considered a manifestation of the divine will. Frequent mention of God's seeing (ראה) and declaring goodness (1.4, 10, 12, etc.) may also constitute judicial language.⁴⁹ Establishing God as water-controller here in the creation narrative supports the distinguishing (judicial) role of water in the deluge and sea crossing accounts. Once more, then, the depiction of the uncontrolled primal waters as chaos, along with that of God as water-controller, may function to establish an interpretive paradigm for understanding the cultic pattern of approaching God (via a judicial water ordeal where only the righteous are granted deliverance).

2. THE WATERS OF LIFE

Through divine control the waters of chaos become waters of life. Now while human life, to be sure, is the pinnacle creative act⁵⁰ within "the heavens and the earth," yet it is itself but a part of

⁴⁶ D.T. Tsumura, "Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood," 41: "In various parts of the ancient Near East a rain-god such as Ada, Hadad, and Baal is called 'a giver of abundant water-supply.' In the Fekheriyeh Inscription, for example, he is described not only as a rain-giver but also as the 'water-controller of all rivers.' Similarly...the LORD God of Genesis 2 is presumably understood as a rain-giver and as *the controller* of the subterranean waters. When he planted a garden in a well-watered place, he apparently drained the *ʿēd*-water there. Thus, he is also *a controller* of both rain and the subterranean water. However, the LORD God is more than a water-controller. He is the maker of the total universe, of 'earth and heaven' (*ʿereṣ w'šāmāyim*, 2.4)" (emphasis added). Cf. also Tsumura's chapter 7 "God and the Waters," pp 128-40 in his *Creation and Destruction* (esp. 129).

⁴⁷ P.H. Seely, "The Firmament and the Water Above, Part II: The Meaning of 'The Water above the Firmament' in Gen 1.6-8," *WTJ* 54 (1992) 34.

⁴⁸ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 20 (emphasis added).

⁴⁹ See, e.g., N.M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989) 47.

⁵⁰ G. von Rad notes: "The use of the verb *bārāʾ* in v 27 receives its fullest significance for that divine creativity which is absolutely without analogy. It occurs three times in the one verse to make clear that here the high point and goal has been reached toward which all God's creativity from v 1 was directed" (*Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed. [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972] 57).

the broader theme of life.⁵¹ This becomes more evident upon returning to the foil of v 2 and recalling the significance of תְּהוֹם as a realm either, in its more neutral slant, unable to sustain life,⁵² or, more negatively, hostile to it. Further, תְּהוֹם is sometimes set forth in the Old Testament as “extend[ing] to the very boundaries of *Sheol* (Ezk 31.15; Jon 2.6f[5f]),”⁵³ the place of the dead. This foil in mind, one might expect the word תָּיִה (“life”/“living”) to receive particular emphasis in the narrative. Given the author’s demonstrable control over the text numerically, it is perhaps not insignificant that the central word of the pericope—literally, with 234 words on either side, is the first appearance in the narrative (and thus also in the canonical Scriptures) of תָּיִה (*hayyâ* “living,” 1.20),⁵⁴ as the waters “swarm with swarms of living creatures.” Wenham points out that the verb יִשְׂרָשׁוּ (*yîšrēšû* “swarm”) used with its cognate noun שָׂרָשׁ (*šeres* “swarming

⁵¹ So W. Brueggemann notes: “God is the God of all creation....verses 3-25 protest against an *exclusively* anthropocentric view of the world” (*Genesis* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1982] 30-1). Cf. B.K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 60.

⁵² T.A. Perry, “A Poetics of Absence,” 7.

⁵³ *TDOT* VIII.275.

⁵⁴ In addition to the emphasis of (1) narrative structure, תָּיִה is also highlighted (2) in being the first instance of created life; (3) in receiving the first benediction of God, 1.22 (B.W. Anderson, “A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story,” pp 148-62 in *Canon and Authority: Essays in Old Testament Religion and Theology*, G.W. Coats, B.O. Long, eds. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 158: “The first appearance of *nepeš hayyâ* (biological life in contrast to organic life) is accompanied by a special blessing (v 22).” Highlighted the more so as it is noticeably absent from the creation of land-animals (1.24-25). Cf. W. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 31; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 157; G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 56); (4) in being accented on this first occurrence (1.20) by the Masoretes with the disjunctive *athnak*, which “may be exegetically important [for] marking the emphasis of the verse,” thus demonstrating their awareness of its significance (R.T. Fuller and K. Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006] 27 fn8. Cf. also J.D. Price, “Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible” [Paper presented at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of ETS March 18, 2006, available at: www.jamesdprice.com/images/Pausal_Forms_ETC_paper.pdf]; *idem.*, *The Syntax of Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible* [Edwin Mellen Press, 1990] 18); (5) in its sharply unexpected occurrence within the waters once contributing to *tôhû wābôhû*, vv 20-1: “Let *the waters* swarm with swarms of living creatures...all the moving living creatures *with which the waters* swarm” (this significance was not lost on von Rad who states: “nothing in this realm [the sea], which, as we saw, is close nevertheless to the dimension of chaos, is outside the creative will of God” [*Genesis*, 56-7]); (6) in using “the verb *bārā’* (‘create’) to designate special and exclusive divine creativity...deliberately. Significantly, it is used first (if we disregard the summary title in v 1) for the creation of living creatures” (G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 56); (7) in the fifth day’s parallel to the climactic sixth day’s creation of life (1.20-1//1.24-5), so that both the waters and the earth yield תָּיִה; (8) in the sevenfold occurrence of תָּיִה in the fifth and sixth paragraphs (U. Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 14); (9) in being, before the culminating “very good” divine declaration of v 31, the final emphasis of v 30 as the vegetative plants are expressly provided for תָּיִה אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ גִפְשׁ תָּיִה.

things”) carries “overtones of abundant fertility.”⁵⁵ These overtones are more explicit when compounded by other terms, such as פָּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמָלְאוּ (“be fruitful and multiply and fill”), in a cluster. Indeed, it “is possible that the Hebrew writer is deliberately exploiting the phonetic similarity of the terms ‘bless’ בָּרַךְ, ‘be fruitful’ פָּרָה, ‘multiply’ רָבָה, and ‘create’ בָּרָא, as well as their ideological connections by juxtaposing them in these verses.”⁵⁶ Thus the waters, once deluging the earth so that it was תְּהוֹמֵי תְבֵהוּ, a sphere hostile to life, now having been subjugated by God are, dramatically, the first realm of life—they have become waters of life. We turn now to consider this subjugation of the waters further particularly in relation to the fructifying river described in Gen 2.10-14.

3. THE COSMIC WATERS OF EDEN

Given the idea that water when uncontrolled brings chaos and death but when controlled and bounded brings life, the movement of Gen 1 to 2-3 may entail the progression from the watery chaotic abyss to the fructifying rivers of Eden. Rivers are associated with the insurgent waters, and the case may be made for a more holistic cosmological portrayal in Gen 1-3, with the deep’s being the source of the fertilizing waters of life:

We have already noted in contexts of the insurgent waters several occurrences of *n’hārôt*, “rivers.” These rivers are associated with the deep (*t’hôm*) or sea. They are the rivers of the deep. In Ezek 31 of the stately cedar or “world-tree” which is Egypt it is said that waters nourished it, and the deep made it grow, pouring its rivers (*n’hārôt*) around the place where it was planted, and sending its channels to all the trees of the field (vs. 4). The rivers have their source in and belong to the *t’hôm* beneath the earth....In Ezek 32.13, 14 Yahweh will destroy the beasts of Egypt from beside many waters, and make their waters clear and cause their rivers to run like oil; the antecedent of “their” is “many waters.” Ps 24.2 describes how Yahweh founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers. This close association of sea and rivers explains how the rivers and sea might be linked together as the insurgent waters....[T]he expression “many waters” [in Ezek 31.4ff may] refer to the waters of the deep beneath the earth as the source of fertilizing waters.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 23-4. Cf. U. Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 51f. Cassuto goes on to note the link between benison and fecundity in the book of Genesis: 9.1; 17.16, 20; 22.17; 24.60; 26.3-4, 24; 28.3; 35.9-11; 48.3-4; 49.25.

⁵⁶ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 25. Cf. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 56.

⁵⁷ H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *mayim rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” 19, 20.

Of particular interest here is how YHWH will “cause their [the many waters’] rivers to run like oil,” for it presents the quelling of the deep as a transformation of it into a source of life. Might this idea represent the movement from Gen 1 to 2-3? Precisely such would be in accord with biblical cosmology as it pertains to cosmic mountain ideology, as Stager writes:

Cosmic mountains...were traditionally situated above the primordial waters (the “deep”), which, in an orderly cosmos, became *the source* of the sacred rivers that watered the four quarters of the earth...These quiet, cosmic waters emanating from the primordial deep signified the orderliness and tranquility of God’s creation, on which humans could rely...In biblical cosmology the earth is an island floating on the cosmic waters that rise in the Garden of Eden, where they benefit humankind.⁵⁸

To be sure, water appears to be emphatic in both the Gen 1 and 2-3 accounts, serving as a thematic link between them, with both arguably reflecting essentially the same cosmology.⁵⁹ If the foil of Gen 1 is primarily that of a watery chaos, one might also note (as Levenson does), that Eden is *fundamentally* the place from which the primordial river springs, dividing into four great branches.⁶⁰ Indeed, at “the *center* of the creation narrative in Genesis 2 lies the description of the four rivers which flowed from the Garden of Eden.”⁶¹ For paradise, the dwelling of God, to be the source of life-giving waters is, moreover, in keeping with general Mesopotamian thought.⁶²

⁵⁸ L.E. Stager, “Jerusalem as Eden,” BAR 26.3 (2000) 36-47. B. Margulis presumably agrees, noting the “extraordinary t̥hōm-nurtured tree in Ez 31 is ‘the envy of all the trees of “Eden” which are in the garden of God’ (v 9)” (“Weltbaum and Weltberg in Ugaritic Literature,” ZAW 86.1 [1974] 18). E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns in Babylonian Religion,” pp 43-70 in *The Labyrinth*, S.H. Hooke, ed. (London: SPCK, 1935) 55ff, explains that תְּהוֹם has two aspects: the primeval abyss and source of the fresh waters of the world, the two being related in rabbinic literature.

⁵⁹ D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 28-29: “And the underground-water was flooding out to inundate the whole area of the “land,” but not the entire earth as in Gen 1.2. Thus, Genesis 1 describes an earlier stage in the one creation process in which the waters cover the earth, Genesis 2 a later stage (in 1.9-10) in which the waters have separated and the dry land has appeared.” L.I.J. Stadelmann (*The Hebrew Conception of the World*) notes: “The emergence of the dry land is preceded by the separation of the waters from the earth. But just as the word ‘earth,’ in Gen 1.2, refers to the earth in its primitive chaotic, unformed state, so the term ‘waters,’ is taken in the sense of abyss, the primeval ocean” (126-27).

⁶⁰ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985) 129. Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 216 who speaks of the “life-arteries” of all lands of the earth having their source in “the river that watered paradise.”

⁶¹ W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2,” *Origins* 16.2 (1989) 49-68, accessed at: www.grisda.org/origins/16049.htm (emphasis mine).

⁶² R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Harvard U Press, 1972) 101, 159 (emphasis added).

Being the source of waters may even be intrinsic to the name “Eden” itself.⁶³ If a common West Semitic derivation is accepted, the Hebrew עֵדֶן *‘ēden* likely means “a place of abundant water supply” (see Gen 13.10).⁶⁴ In light of the consistent biblical and comparative background use of עֵדֶן, Anderson thus says

one can finally put to rest the notion that Gen 2.10-14 is somehow secondary to the larger paradise narrative. The presence of these rivers is necessary within the narrative for this particular garden (*gan*) to become the *gan-‘ēden*. It must be original to the story.⁶⁵

Beyond contextual coherence, W.H. Shea notes the literary artistry in the river’s description:

The section [Gen 2] begins with a general observation: “And a river went out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it was divided and became four heads” (v 10). The identification and description of each river follows:

(1) “The name of the first was Pishon; it was the one which went around the whole land of Havilah where there is gold –and the gold of that land is good– there is (also) bdellium and onyx stone.”

(2) “The name of the second river was Gihon; it went around the whole land of Cush.”

(3) “The third river was the Tigris; it went east of Assyria.”

(4) “The fourth river was the Euphrates” (vv 11-14).

The description of these rivers has been outlined in decrescendo form, and each of the successive descriptions becomes shorter and shorter. The first description names the river, states its location, and describes the precious metals and stones that were present. The second description names the river and the land around which it flowed, but no detailed information about that land is given. The third description also names the river and its location, but even this description is shorter than that of the previous river. The fourth river is only named; the country or countries by which it flowed are not named, and no description is given. The same pattern is also evident in the Hebrew word counts. The four successive river descriptions are given in 20, 10, 8, and 4 Hebrew words respectively. Perhaps it is coincidental that the second description is half the length of the first, and the fourth is half of the third. What surely is not coincidence, however, is that the

⁶³ D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 40: “In the light of the new information from Fekheriyeh, Millard, Greenfield, and others have recently suggested that the term *‘ēden* means ‘a well-watered place.’ This fits the context of Genesis 2 very well.” E.A. Speiser (*Genesis*, 16) had suggested that Eden, “Akk. *edinu*, based on Sum. *eden*” means “plain, steppe.” While G.H. Gispen considers this meaning “not acceptable,” he does not justify his assertion (“Genesis 2.10-14,” pp 115-24 in *Studia Biblica Et Semitica: Theodoro Christiano Vriezen Qui Munere Professoris Theologiae Per XXV Annos Functus Est, Ab Amicis, Collegis, Discipulis Dedicata* [Wageningen: H. Veenman En Zonen N.V., 1966] 116). Tsumura considers three theoretically possible explanations for the etymology: (a) Sumerian Loanword Directly into West Semitic, (b) Sumerian Loanword via Akkadian into West Semitic, (c) Common West Semitic (40-41). So, too, J.H.. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” *DOTP* 202: “Because the garden was planted in a well-watered place (Eden), it took Eden as its name. ...The picture is of a mighty spring that gushes out from Eden and is channeled through the garden for irrigation purposes. All of these channels then serve as headwaters for the four rivers flowing out in various directions as the waters exit the garden. This type of waterworks was known in the ancient world.”

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶⁵ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain: Eden and its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity,” pp 187-224 in *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden*, G.A. Robbins, ed. (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 197. *Contra* C.J. Collins (*Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* [Phillipsburg: P & R, 2006] 119) who refers to 2.10-14 as an “excursus.”

writer designed an intentional and progressive reduction in the length of each statement and the number of words employed to state them. What did the author wish to express by this format? ...[A] preliminary answer is that the writer employed this form to indicate the central point in the narrative. Different subjects precede and follow it, and in a sense the literary style used to describe the rivers expressed the fact that the “watershed” of the narrative had been reached.⁶⁶

The impression of this “most striking feature of Gen 2.10-14,”⁶⁷ it seems to us, is precisely that of a spring welling up and dissipating as it flows out over all the land—that is, vv 11-14 literarily demonstrate what is explicitly stated in v 10. This impression is created initially by the first two names of the river-heads, which seem to spring up and gush over even as they are read: *Pishon* “the leaper” or “the gusher,” *Gihon* “the springer out.”⁶⁸ Turning briefly to Gen 2.6, for its relation to 2.10-14, the association (first made in 1907 by Edouard Dhorme) of the term *’ēd* in Gen 2.6 with the Sumerian *id*, “the cosmic river,” “accords well with the presumed Mesopotamian background to the Yahwistic creation account, and so has enjoyed wide

⁶⁶ W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2.” One might also add that it may be a coincidence that the total number of words describing the four rivers, 42, is divisible by 7.

⁶⁷ S. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2-3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000) 184.

⁶⁸ Cf. general commentaries on vv 11-13 (Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 64-66; V.P. Hamilton, *Genesis 1-17*, 168-69). N. Wyatt notes the possibility of “Gihon” conjuring up “the primaeval waters of the chaotic womb of all being burst forth as the universe comes to birth” (“Water, Water Everywhere...’: Musings on the Aqueous Myths of the Near East,” pp 189-237 in *The Mythic Mind*, 192-95; first published in *De la Tablilla a la Inteligencia Artificial. Homenaje al Prof. Jesus Luis Cunchillos en su 65 aniversario*, D.A. Gonzalez Blanco, J.P. Vita, J.A. Zamora, eds. [Proximo Oriente Antiguo, Instituto de Estudios Islamicos y del Oriente Proximo: Zaragoza, 2004] 211-59). For the physical background of the biblical Garden of Eden in relation to the rivers, cf. E.A. Speiser, “The Rivers of Paradise,” pp. 175-82 in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood*; T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 273-85. NOTE: “In biblical literature (as in the ancient Orient) the number four is symbolic, indicating spatial and geographical completeness. It may be applied to limited constructions. More often it designates the entire world: There are four corners of the world (Isa 11.12), four “endings” of the heavens (Jer 49.36; Ezek 37.9; Zech 6.5, etc.). In some instances the number simply means “all over, everywhere,” as in Isa 11.12” (T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 275). Thus, given (1) the prevalence of numerical symbolism in biblical literature, (2) the lack of scholarly consensus as to the geographical referents of the Pishon and Gihon, (3) the literal meaning of these first two rivers — and this with their literary placement at the head of vv 11-14, and (4) the common ancient Near Eastern idea of specifically *two* cosmic rivers, sometimes even identified as the Tigris and the Euphrates (E.T. Mullen Jr, *The Assembly of the Gods: The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature* (HSMM 24; Harvard: Scholars Press, 1972) 151-54; F. Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies? Eine Biblisch-Assyriologische studie* [Leipzig: Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1881] 79-83; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 18, 48) may it be possible the first two rivers flowing out of Eden are themselves mere symbols of the bubbling-over abundance of the river’s supply? Cf. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 101; Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 116.

acceptance.”⁶⁹ Thus construed, v 6 describes the fresh-water ocean watering the earth while v 10 depicts the river watering the garden, implying that the river itself is fed by this subterranean ocean.⁷⁰ After considering this theme in *Enuma elish*, Seely writes:

Other Babylonian texts also make reference to rivers coming up from the deep below. The Code of Hammurabi and several sections of the Atrahasis epic mention “floods [rising] from the abyss.” In Babylonian thought then, the earth floated on an Ocean, a Deep, an Abyss (*Apsu*). This ocean was spoken of as being as deep under the earth as the sky was high over the earth. Accordingly, it was an inexhaustible source of water for all springs and lakes as well as for mighty rivers like the Tigris and the Euphrates. In addition, this Apsu upon which the earth floated was thought of as the same sea that encircled the earth....Earthly fresh-water springs were, in fact, so closely linked in people’s minds with the great *tehom* below the earth (Gen 49.25; Deut 33.13) that the earthly springs were themselves sometimes called *tehom* (Ezek 31.4) or *tehomot* (Deut 8.7).⁷¹

The ךַּ-water flooding out of the subterranean water in Gen 2.6 may thereby be related to the םַּ-water of the subterranean ocean.⁷² Thus understood, a case may be made for viewing Eden’s life-giving⁷³ river as the result of the divine subjugation of Gen 1’s watery abyss.

Psalm 104, generally connected to Gen 1 by scholars, portrays the subdued cosmic waters (vv 6-7) as providing the sources for springs (vv 8-13).⁷⁴ This composite picture also appears of

⁶⁹ P.K. McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” *HTR* 66.4 (Oct 1973) 403. Wenham also notes the likely Mesopotamian background to Gen 2.6 whereby the Hebrew word ךַּ is interpreted as “spring” in the old translations (LXX, Vg, S) “which fits in with the more likely etymology of the word from Sumerian/Akkadian, *id*, which represents the cosmic river” (*Genesis 1-15*, 58). On the same page he further notes: “But Saebo (*ST* 24 [1970] 136) points out that any mythical overtones of the term *ID* in Sumerian have been completely eliminated in the Hebrew account: ךַּ is just a great spring fed from the subterranean ocean.” Cf. however D.T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation* (JSOTSup 83; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989) 93-116; *Ibid.*, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 40. Cf. J.A. Montgomery, “Ras Shamra Notes IV: The Conflict of Baal and the Waters,” *JAOS* 55.3 (1935) 268-77.

⁷⁰ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 64. Similarly, R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 101 writes: “The river which goes out from Eden in verse 10 appears to be an explanation of the ךַּ, ‘the ground-flow’ of verse 6. It may be assumed, then, that the *nāhār* of verse 10 rises from the subterranean sweet water to bring life to the face of the earth.” Cf. E.J. Young, *In the Beginning* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1976) 67-68.

⁷¹ P.H. Seely, “Geographical Meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas,’” *WTJ* 59 (1997) 245, 253-54. Seely also notes (252): “In the blessings of Joseph first by Jacob (Gen 49.25 [MT 24]) and later by Moses (Deut 33.13) there is a reference to the ‘deep sea (*tehom*) lying below’ as the source of spring and/or river water for farming.”

⁷² D.T. Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters*, 122.

⁷³ “The picture of a great river flowing out of Eden is akin to Ps 46.5, ‘There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,’ and Ezekiel’s description of the eschatological Jerusalem from which a great river will flow to sweeten the Dead Sea (Ezek 47.1-12). In every case the river is symbolic of the life-giving presence of God” (G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 65). Cf. D. Patte and J.F. Parker, “A Structural Exegesis of Genesis 2 and 3,” *Semeia* 18 (1980) 153-57; S. Tuell, “The Rivers of Paradise: Ezekiel 47.1-12 and Genesis 2.10-14,” pp 171-89 in *God Who Creates*.

a piece with the idea found in Ps 46 whereby the waters that once threatened destruction are subdued and transformed, via YHWH's victory, into the river of life flowing out of Zion.⁷⁵

Jerome F.D. Creach, in his article on Ps 1.3, brings out this mythopoeic context:

This point [that *plg* describes the water that flows from the holy mountain] is abundantly clear in Pss 46.5 and 65.10, where one finds the ancient Near Eastern idea that the earth's water originates on the mountain of the gods. In Ps 46.5 (*nāhār p'lēgāyw y'samm'hû 'îr-ʾlōhîm*, "a river, the streams of which make glad the city of God"), *p'lēgāyw* are the courses of the river that flow through the holy city, and the water of this stream is contrasted with the chaotic sea beneath the mountain (46.2-4). In Ps 65.10 (*peleg ʾlōhîm mālē' māyim*, "the stream of God shall be full of water"), the "stream of God" signifies the deity's power experienced on Zion, and it is spoken of in relation to *the taming* of the waters of chaos (65.6-8). Clearly, the connection between the watering of the earth and the flowing of the *peleg ʾlōhîm* reflects the belief so common in mythopoeic lore that deities *controlled* the waters of the earth and guided them to their proper places. The idea of watering the earth (65.10) may include the giving of rain, but the contrast of the "stream of God" with the chaotic waters denotes a water source of "universal" import.⁷⁶

The importance of the cultic role of this river,⁷⁷ connecting the Gihon of the garden with that of Jerusalem/Zion⁷⁸ becomes evident in light of the ancient Near Eastern background⁷⁹ whereby it

⁷⁴ M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010) 26. Cf. J. Day, "How Many Pre-exilic Psalms are There?" pp 225-50 in *In Search of Pre-exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminary*, J. Day, ed. (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004) 238-40.

⁷⁵ S. Kelly, "Psalm 46," *JBL* 89.3 (1970) 309. The syntax of 2.10-14 may also be brought in here to support the idea of divine control over the waters: "The verbal make-up of the verse is peculiar. Preceding verses have *wayyiqtol* forms, with YHWH God as agent. Those are taken up again in 2.15. Verse 10 portrays the river as subject for an act denoted by a participle. All verbs describing agency of the rivers in this section are participles. This renders 2.10-14 as a parenthetic description in past durative, a perspective including even the imperfect forms in the section. Yet, the incident is suggested as purposeful through the infinitive construct in 2.10a. The one who conceivably has intention is YHWH God— "Sender" of the garden scheme. Gen 2.10-14 seems to portray a situation provided by YHWH God in continuation of v 8f and as a general background for 2.15f" (T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 274).

⁷⁶ J.F.D. Creach, "Like a Tree Planted by the Temple Stream: The Portrait of the Righteous in Psalm 1:3," *CBQ* 61 (1999) 42 (emphasis added).

⁷⁷ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 197-98: "The cultic role of this river is intimated in several biblical texts. We mentioned above the likely cultic role of the river in the anointing of Solomon in 1 Kgs 1, the oracular use of the river in Isa 7-8 and of course the metaphoric usage in Ps 36. Another important text which gives witness to its cultic role is Ps 46.5. This Psalm declares that the river "makes the city of God rejoice." The term "rejoice" in Hebrew should not be confused with its counterparts in western European languages. The term, in Hebrew (as well as other Semitic languages) very often refers to cultic joy. Significantly, the cultic usage of this stream, and the cultic joy it produces is amply described in the Mishnah (*Sukkah* 4.8-10). According to this tractate, in the Second Temple period the sacred waters from the Gihon stream were carried to the temple and ceremonially poured into a bowl beside the altar. This cultic description makes an explicit identification between the waters of the Gihon spring and the life-giving waters of the cosmic mountain/temple. As the Talmud relates, there was no rejoicing like the rejoicing of this event (*b. Sukkah* 51b). This brief description of a Mishnaic ritual builds very nicely on the cosmic role of the Gihon spring as it is described in Gen 2.13 (*Urzeit*) and Ezek 47 (*Endzeit*)...The images of *Urzeit* (Gihon) and *Endzeit* (waters emanating from temple) come together in the ritual of the cult. This ritual also serves as an exegesis of Psalm 46.5. It interprets, in a very appropriate fashion, the type of rejoicing this river provides for the city of God. It is the source of living waters which may be experienced partially and proleptically within the cultus of the temple." This provides, of course, the context for John 7.37-39 where Christ's outpouring of the Spirit is the

was thought the temple's foundation stone was what kept the waters of chaos subdued.⁸⁰

Lundquist's third proposition regarding temples makes this precise connection to the primeval waters:

The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself—or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring. The reason such springs exist in temples is that they are perceived as the primeval waters of creation, Nun in Egypt, Abzu in Mesopotamia. The temple is thus founded on and stands in contact with primeval waters.⁸¹

In rabbinic cosmology, the connection is explicit:

Mount Zion is the capstone which keeps in place the waters of chaos whose subjugation made creation and hence all civilization possible. Were it not for the Temple on Zion, those angry waters would surge from the abyss in which they are imprisoned, undo the work of creation, and return the world to the primordial chaos which is described in Gen 1.2. In fact, some rabbinic sayings mention moments when precisely such a reversion threatened to become reality:

At the time that David dug the foundations [for the Temple], the watery abyss [*t'homā*] came to the surface and sought to flood the world. David recited the fifteen [songs of] ascent [Pss 120-34] and brought them [i.e., the waters] down [b. *Sukk.* 53a].

spiritual reality of the cultic mythopoeic expectation. J.F.D. Creach draws out the connection between the rivers and Torah: "In Sir 24.25-27 the writer says of *tôrā*: *It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom, and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits. It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding, and like the Jordan at harvest time. It pours forth instruction like the Nile, like the Gihon at the time of vintage.* In this play on Gen 2.10-14 *tôrā* is painted as a wellspring of vitality like the rivers that flow from Eden. The writer adds the Jordan and the Nile to the list of streams and moves the Gihon to the end of the enumeration. These alterations indicate that he has in mind Jerusalem...as the paradise of God" ("Psalm 1:3," 45). So, too, Fesko (*Last Things First* [Geanies House: Mentor, 2007] 60): "Confirmation that the references to water and rivers are symbolic imagery can be found in a number of places throughout Scripture...God's revelation is connected to the symbolic imagery of a river in the prophet Isaiah; God's prophetic word is compared to 'The waters of Shiloah that flow softly' (Isa 8.6). Because the people reject God's word, 'the Lord is bringing up against them the waters of the River, mighty and many.'" M.G. Kline (*Images of the Spirit* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1998] 42) writes that God's presence on His "mountain throne-site in Eden was evidently the spring-source of the river in paradise."

⁷⁸ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 130-31; G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 193. Cf. R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 160 fn 82: "The Gihon is the river of Jerusalem and it may be intended to link paradise and the mountain, source of water, with Zion."

⁷⁹ See, e.g., J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 182: "This association between ancient Near Eastern temples and spring waters is well attested. In fact, some temples in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and in the Ugartic myth of Baal were considered to have been founded upon springs (likened to the primeval waters), which sometimes flowed from the building itself. Thus, the symbolic cosmic mountain (temple) stood upon the symbolic primeval waters (spring)."

⁸⁰ Cf. J.A. Montgomery, "The Holy City and Gehenna," *JBL* 27.1 (1908) 28-29; H.A.J. Kruger, "Subscripts to Creation: A Few Exegetical Comments on the Literary Device of Repetition in Gen 1-11," pp 429-46 in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, A. Wénin, ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 438-39; M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008) 18-20.

⁸¹ J.M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology" pp 205-19 in *Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, A.R.W. Green, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 208.

In fact, a late Aramaic translation of the Torah speaks of a rock, the “rock of foundation,” *ʿeḥen šēṭīya*, on which the ineffable four-letter name of God was engraved, and with which God “sealed the mouth of the great abyss in the beginning” [Targ. Pseudo-Jon. to Ex 28.30].⁸²

Connecting the Eden river of Gen 2 with the deep of Gen 1, then, leads to significant parallels with the temple,⁸³ precisely the contextual reading we are positing.

To conclude, many biblical and post-biblical creation “descriptions more or less clearly suppose that the creation was preceded by a subjection of the sea by YHWH.”⁸⁴ The point here is simply that that subjugation, even as expressed in the dividing of the Sea (Exod 14), is how God controlled the waters of destruction such that they became waters of life. Perhaps, then, the inclusion of Gen 2.10-14 in the so-called “second” creation account, rather than being a mere “excursus,” may be seen as fundamentally related to the subjugation of the primeval chaotic waters in Gen 1, that is, part of a more complete cosmological portrayal. Keel’s comments provide a helpful summation, linking the creation waters, once more, to the cultus of Israel—a point significant to our study:

⁸² J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 133-34; M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 18-19; E. Burrows, “Some Cosmological Patterns,” 55ff. Cf. Isa 28.16; Matt 21.42; Mk 12.10; Lk 20.17; Acts 4.11; Ro 9.33; Eph 2.20; 1Pe 2.6-8.

⁸³ H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *mayim rabbîm*, ‘Many Waters,’” [20,] 21: “In Num 20.11 when at Meribah Moses struck the rock, ‘many waters’ went forth, suggesting their origin in the deep. The source of the fertilizing waters in the great deep may in some of these passages be thought to explain the great fertility and luxuriant growth that is pictured....[The sea of bronze (1 Kings 7.23ff) stood for the cosmic sea, the *ṭhôm*, as the subterranean ocean from which all fertility was derived.] Since it was not fed by tributaries, it must have been the deep (*ṭhôm*) which was the source of the river of life which flowed from beneath the threshold of Ezekiel’s temple, beside which grew all kinds of trees for food....” Cf. also J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 139, 162; *Idem.*, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 92-93; G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse and Its Implications for a Biblical Theology of the Temple,” pp 191-209 in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, T.D. Alexander, S. Gathercole, eds. (Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2004) 194, for other cosmic symbolism regarding Solomon’s Temple. M. Himmelfarb, “The Temple and the Garden of Eden in Ezekiel, the Book of the Watchers, and the Wisdom of ben Sira,” pp. 63-79 in *Sacred Places and Profane Places: Essays in the Geographics of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, J. Scott and P. Simpson-Housley, eds. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991) 65. So, too, Keel notes: “Just as the streams which water the earth flow forth from paradise (Gen 2.10-14), so too the blessing which emanates from the temple (Ps 133.3) will take concrete form in rivers which fructify the entire country. ...Commentators generally agree that this stream [“which makes glad the city of God” Ps 46.4] makes Jerusalem a kind of paradise” (*The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 138). Cf. J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 60. M. Barker quotes the Letter of Aristeas, a visitor to Palestine from Egypt, 83: “And there is an inexhaustible supply of water, because an abundant natural spring gushes up from within the temple area” (*The Gate of Heaven*, 8-9).

⁸⁴ H. Gunkel, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation*, K.W. Whitney Jr., trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 12, 63. Gunkel has in mind here Ps 104.5-9; Job 38.8-11; Prov 8.22-31; Jer 5.22b; 31.35; Ps 33.6-8; Ps 65.7f; Sir 43.(25) 23; Prayer of Manasseh 2-4.

In the psalms, Yahweh himself is the source of all life. The river of delights emanates from him (Ps 36.8-9). ...To be sure, the “bronze sea” (cf. 1 Kgs 7.23-26, 44; 2 Chr 4.2-10) is not mentioned in the psalms. However, it does play a part in the water symbolism of the psalms, and it must therefore be considered here. The term “sea” indicates that this is no mere wash basin (though it naturally fulfilled that function). Rather, its water represented the harnessed, subdued Chaos from which the world arose. Whether it represents the heavenly or the subterranean ocean is an irrelevant question since both oceans (and the earthly ocean as well) originally and essentially belong together. ...*The subdued primeval waters fecundate the earth* (cf. Pss 46.4 with 46.3; 74.15 with 74.13-14; 104.10 with 104.6-9).⁸⁵

The waters aspect of cosmic mountain ideology, then, serves as a unifying conceptual link between Gen 1 and Gen 2-3. We may already begin to see how Gen 1-3 constructs a cosmogonic “map,” portraying the holy mountain of God surrounded by the subjugated primal waters, and from which flow streams of living waters.

B. *The Creation as the Earth's Deliverance*

1. DRAWN OUT OF THE WATERS

Correlative with the transformation of the waters of chaos into waters of life, their control by God leads to the deliverance of the earth, an event in view already in v 2 when the earth is described as a *weltering wasteland* (תהו ובהו), deluged in the *watery abyss* (תהום).⁸⁶ This idea, to keep our objective in view, is in keeping with the judicial water ordeal paradigm whereby the deity delivers the righteous/innocent through the waters of judgment. Particularly when read from the perspective of קדש, the Gen 1 account appears to portray creation as a divine deliverance.

Verse 2, as a foil for the creation work, establishes the “great central theme”⁸⁷ of the earth—“which is the center of description as the emphatic position of this term in the Hebrew

⁸⁵ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 136 (emphasis added). He also notes that the bulls bearing the bronze sea are symbols of fertility.

⁸⁶ For translating *tehom* as “the Abyss,” cf. B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 76.

⁸⁷ R. Ouro, “The Earth of Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part I” 262. E.J. Young (*Studies in Genesis One*, 30-1) calls the earth the “grand theme.”

text indicates”⁸⁸—particularly in relation and with reference to the waters,⁸⁹ giving us a picture of an unformed earth immersed completely in the תְּהוֹם.⁹⁰ More precisely, and whatever the particular understanding of תְּהוֹם וְכָהוּ, v 2 functions as a foil inasmuch as the weltering wasteland cannot sustain life.⁹¹ This being so, the earth’s emergence out of the waters becomes a climactic focal point of the narrative. B.H. Anderson refers to the third and sixth days as the “climax point of each section...where in each case two creative events pertain to *the earth*.”⁹² On the second day, God had parted (מִבְּדִיל *mabdil*) the waters vertically;⁹³ on the third day, he gathered (יָקַו *yiqqāwû*) them horizontally, drawing out the “dry land” from the waters by fiat, so that it “appears,” v 9:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יָקוּוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וַתֵּרָאָה הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן:

The surface of the earth is the third day’s main concern with God’s approving judgment for the work of the second day being delayed until this final separation of the waters (1.10).⁹⁴ Notably, הַיַּבְשָׁה *hayyabbāšâ* is pointed by the Masoretes with the disjunctive accent *athnak*, indicating the main pause in a verse,⁹⁵ and thus drawing further attention to the dry land’s emergence.⁹⁶ In

⁸⁸ G.F. Hasel, “The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” 85. “This inversion of word order [in Gen 1.2] indicates an emphasis on the subject,” (G.F. Hasel, “Recent Translations of Genesis 1.1: A Critical Look,” *BT* 22 [1971] 160).

⁸⁹ W.A. Gage notes the creation account “describes a processive subduing of darkness and deep” (*The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2001] 17). For a contextual understanding of the “earth” and “waters” of Gen 1 with reference to ancient Near Eastern cosmology, cf. P.H. Seely, “The Geographical Meaning of ‘Earth’ and ‘Seas’ in Genesis 1.10,” 231-55.

⁹⁰ P.H. Seely, “The Firmament and the Water Above,” 39.

⁹¹ Here Cassuto’s translation is especially helpful: *As for the earth, it was without form or life* (Genesis 1, 21).

⁹² B.W. Anderson, “A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story,” 155 (emphasis original).

⁹³ G.M. Landes reads Prov 8.28 as suggesting the vault needed to be strengthened because “the waters above it are quite powerful, so that what is to keep them back must be strong or steady” (“Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8.22-31 and Genesis 1,” 284).

⁹⁴ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 151 (emphasis added).

⁹⁵ C.H. van der Merwe, J.A. Naude, and J.H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 45.

⁹⁶ The *athnak* occurs “at syntactically and rhetorical significant places in the text that influence exegesis,” (James D. Price, “Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible” [Paper presented at the

keeping with ANE cosmogony in general, and with the subsequent Gen 2-3 narrative in particular, it may be the reader is intended to understand this emergence of “dry land” in terms of the primeval mound’s emergence.

The earth’s being drawn out of the waters contributes to the idea of the “birth” of the cosmos, and even the earth itself appears to be described in terms of a womb.⁹⁷ Being delivered from the waters by God’s control,⁹⁸ the earth is then called to sprout vegetation and fruit-bearing trees, in prospect of the corresponding sixth day (vv 29-30). Now while the theology of the Pentateuch in general and of the creation account in particular precludes any notion of “Mother Earth,” the Scriptures nevertheless poetically attribute birthing imagery to the earth (cf. Romans

Southeastern Regional Meeting of ETS March 18, 2006, available at: www.jamesdprice.com/images/Pausal_Forms_ETS_paper.pdf). Cf. also J. Price, *The Syntax of Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) 18.

⁹⁷ The earth’s womb-like productivity appears evident in v 11 as the divine word enables what has just been created to be the source of something new. Cf. W.H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift: Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Genesis 1, 1-2, 4a und 2, 4b-3, 24* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1973) 106; G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 55; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 125; L. Schottroff, “The Creation Narrative: Genesis 1.1-2.4a,” pp 24-38 in *A Feminist Companion to Genesis*, A. Brenner, ed. [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997] 25. For the homology of earth and womb, and its relation—pertinent to our study—to the tabernacle cultus, see R. Whitekettle, “Levitical Thought and the Female Reproductive Cycle: Wombs, Wellsprings, and the Primeval World,” *VT* 46 (1996) 376-91; G.J. Wenham (“Why Does Sexual Intercourse Defile (Lev 15.18)?” *ZAW* 95 [1983] 434 fn3), similarly shows how the purity laws themselves interpreting the spectrum of “impurity”→“holiness” in relation to “lack of life”→“fullness of life,” with God being the God of “fullness of life.” For the homology of earth and womb, more generally, see L. Barkan, *Nature’s Work of Art: The Human Body as Image of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975); M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York, 1959) 172; A. Gottlieb, “Menstrual Cosmology among the Beng of Ivory Coast,” pp 55-74 in *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*, T. Buckley, A. Gottlieb eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988); M.H. Pope, *Song of Songs* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977) 323-26; D. Marcus, “A Famous Analogy of Rib-Haddi,” *JANES* 5 (1973) 281-286. Contributing to the birthing theme, are the related ideas of “*toledoth*” and “seed.” For the former, see C. Westermann, *Genesis: An Introduction*, J.J. Scullion, trans. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992) 26. J. Blenkinsopp agrees: “Another standard form of cosmogony, creation as procreation or theogony, is faintly reflected in the P *tôl’qôl* which begin with the heavens and the earth (Gen 2.4)...” (“Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38.3 [July 1976] 285 fn 43). S.R. Kulling even suggests the *tôl’qôl* are what demonstrate that Genesis is “eine konstruierte Tendenzschrift” (*Zur Datierung Der “Genesis-P-Stücke,”* [Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1964] 226. For “seed,” see T.D. Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” *TynBul* 44.2 (1993) 259-60; *idem.*, “Further Observations on the Term “Seed” in Genesis,” *TynBul* 48.2 (1997) 363-67; J. Collins, “A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3.15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?” *TynBul* 48.1 (1997) 139-48.

⁹⁸ G.J. Wenham (*Genesis 1-15*, 20), e.g., notes that it “was God’s power that limited the waters to certain areas (cf. Jer 5.22).”

8.22), qualifying that imagery by the power and will of God.⁹⁹ By the superintending Spirit the watery tomb, the תהום of the dark תהו, becomes a watery womb out of which יצא emerges. Birthing imagery being integral to the portrayal of creation, then, the cosmogonic mimesis of being delivered through the waters will also signify a “new birth.”

2. THE EARTH AND MAN

When the close association between the earth/land and man is appreciated,¹⁰⁰ then one can begin to see the pattern of man’s deliverance through the waters (via the earth’s deliverance) to the mountain of God. Thematically, both the emergence of land out of the waters and the creation of human life form climactic foci, resolving the “formless” and “void” state of the earth, respectively. Here literary form follows substance, for the narrative structure highlights the third and the sixth days of creation, focusing on land and man (see my panel outline below).¹⁰¹ These two days are also tied lexically by two isolated uses of יצר in the narrative, the earth “springs forth” vegetation on the third day and living creatures on the sixth day. Following the panel shift of the first 3 days to the second 3 days, as from general habitat to particular habitants, the

⁹⁹ K.A. Matthews (*Genesis 1-11:26*, 152), e.g., writes: “There is no hint of the pagan notion of Mother Earth. The land by itself, of course, does not produce vegetation; rather God enables the land to do so by his creative word.” B.K. Waltke (*Genesis*, 62), similarly, states: “The earth is the agent through which God mediates his generative power. So-called ‘nature’ is God’s mediated power and life. There is no excuse for deifying it as ‘Mother Nature.’” Further, while the literal notion of divine birthing is non-existent in the Hebrew Scriptures, the imagery itself is not shunned completely. Cf. M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 246-52 (246); and Num 11.12; Deut 32.18; Ps 2.7; 90.2; Job 35.28-9.

¹⁰⁰ Man’s tie to land is a pervasive biblical theme. See, e.g., G. Vall, “‘Man is the Land’: The Sacramentality of the Land of Israel,” pp 132-68 in *John Paul II and the Jewish People*, D.G. Dalin, M. Levering, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

¹⁰¹ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 6: “Both days have a double announcement of the divine word ‘And God said’ (vv 9, 11, 24, 26) and the approval formula twice (vv 10, 12, 25, 31), so that they correspond to each other formally. But there is also a correspondence in the contents of the days. Day 3 deals with the creation of the land and plants, while day 6 deals with the animals that live on the land and man....” Cf. also G.W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (FOTL 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 45: “The structure would again point to the cohesion of the center element that excludes the seventh day as a part of the conclusion, and it places emphasis on the third- and sixth-day events as climactic.” See also J.H. Sailhamer, “Exegetical Notes: Genesis 1.1-2.4a,” *Trinity Journal* 5.1 (1984) 74, 77.

climactic creation of humanity, “the crown of God’s handiwork,”¹⁰² is the emphatic denouement of the earth’s former *נִבְהוּ תְהוּ* state.¹⁰³ The emergence of the earth¹⁰⁴ from the waters, then, has in view the creation of man, God’s image within the heavens and the earth. While Gen 1.24 reads: *וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ*, “Man” is not listed as one of those creatures and vv 26-27 may appear to preclude God’s creating Man from the earth—a point we need not vie against given the thematic and lexical connections already discussed. The account of Man’s creation in Gen 2, however, quite explicitly links the two (Gen 2.7):

וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה

Here, again, we find the underlying sentiment of man’s vital relation to the earth/land—the two are a “package deal.” As is well known, this link is brought out verbally: *הָאָדָם* *hā’ādām* (“the Man”) is formed from the *הָאֲדָמָה* *hā’ādāmā* (“the ground”). Now, returning to vv 26-27 of Gen 1, we simply note that the same term *הָאָדָם* is twice used for Man, linking the two accounts.¹⁰⁵ Thus man too, it might be said, emerges from the waters with the earth. As already mentioned, the emergence of land itself may be related to the primeval hillock first to emerge from the waters, the cosmic mountain. Within the context of the judicial river ordeal, the cosmic mountain is the refuge from the primeval waters. Psalm 18.16 [Heb 17], for example, reads:

יִשְׁלַח מִמָּרוֹם יְקַחֵנִי יְמִשְׁנֵי מַמְיִם רַבִּים
He sent from on high, and he took me—he drew me out from “many waters.”

¹⁰² K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 160. Matthews marks the eight-fold emphasis of the creation of human life: (1) the creation account shows an ascending order of significance with human life as the pinnacle; (2) this is the only creative act displaying divine deliberation; (3) this expression replaces the impersonal words of the previous creative acts; (4) human life alone is created in the “image” of God; (5) the verb *bārā’* occurs three times in v 27; (6) the event is given longer description than previous ones; (7) v 27 emphasizes “image” through a chiastic arrangement; (8) unlike animals, said to come from the land, mankind is a direct creation of God.

¹⁰³ G.J. Wenham (*Genesis 1-15*, 27), e.g., states: “With the creation of man the creation account reaches its climax. We have observed how the acts of creation most germane to human existence –the earth, man’s home (vv 9-13), the sun and moon that determine his life cycle (vv 14-19)– were described more fully than other less vital aspects of the created order. But now with man’s creation, the narrative slows down even more to emphasize his significance.”

¹⁰⁴ The earth which “commands the attention of the whole report in vv 3-31” (Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 142).

¹⁰⁵ The account’s single use of *הָאָדָם* immediately precedes, in v 25.

It may be that the vindicated one’s deliverance from those waters was thought of as cosmogonic mimesis, an experience of the earth’s primal deliverance. Indeed, the portrayal of that primal deliverance appears to function throughout Scripture in an experiential manner, proclaiming that the God who conquered chaos to establish creation will also conquer the historical enemies (oft portrayed as chaos monsters) of his new creation, Israel.¹⁰⁶

SUMMARY PROLOGUE		Gen 1.1: “In the beginning God created / the heavens and the earth.”			7
DILEMMA DESCRIBED		Gen 1.2a: “Now the earth was formless and void,” Gen 1.2b: “And darkness was upon the face of the primordial-abyss.” Gen 1.2c: “But the Spirit of God hovered upon the face of the waters.”			7 x 2
	DELIVERANCE	FORMLESS		VOID	
	DAY	1	Light (1.3-5)	4	Luminaries (1.14-19)
	DAY	2	Sky/water (1.6-8)	5	Fish/fowl (1.20-23)
	CLIMACTIC DAY(S)	3	Land/vegetation (1.9-13)	6	Animals/humans (1.24-31)
SUMMARY EPILOGUE		Gen 2.1: “Thus were completed the heavens and the earth and all the host of them.”			
DENOUEMENT DESCRIBED		7	Gen 2.2a: “And God completed on the seventh day His work which He had done.” Gen 2.2b: “And He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” Gen 2.3: “Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work which God created and made.”		7 7 7

Panel Outline (with word-count) – Gen 1.1-2.3¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ W. Brueggemann (*Genesis*, 29-30), e.g., cautions that “we should not lose sight of the experiential factor in the notion of creation from chaos. The lives of many people are chaotic (cf. Mark 1.32-34). In such a context, the text claims that even the chaos of our historical life can be claimed by God for his grand purposes.” Prophetic warning also applies: “The theological application is that persistent disobedience in the nation will bring about a reversal in God’s created order to a state of emptiness and chaos” (W. Hildebrandt, *An OT Theology of the Spirit of God*, 31). Cf. also C.A. Simpson, “An Inquiry into the Biblical Theology of History,” *JTS* 12.1 (1961) 6; E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn: Reflections on Genesis 1.1-10; 2.1-4a,” pp 53-58 in *God Who Creates*; B.W. Anderson, “Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship,” pp 207-32 in *From Creation to New Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994; originally published in *Creation versus Chaos: The Reinterpretation of Mythical Symbolism in the Bible*, B.W. Anderson [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987]) 219-23; J.J.M. Roberts, “The Enthronement of Yhwh and David: The Abiding Theological Significance of the Kingship Language of the Psalms,” *CBQ* 64 (2002) 675-86 (esp. 679-82). S. Niditch brings out Paul’s use of the chaos theme in relation to salvation in Christ (*Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation* [Chico: Scholars Press, 1985] 85-91).

¹⁰⁷ This basic panel construct of symmetry is traced to Johann Gottfried von Herder by Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, D.G. Peterson, trans. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1984) 51. A similar conception is to be found in Ps 33.6: “By the word (דָּבָר) of YHWH the heavens were made [i.e., habitation]/ By the breath (רוּחַ) of his mouth, all the host of them [i.e., inhabitants]”—particularly interesting in the means attributed to the creation of each panel (word vs. wind/breath/spirit).

CONCLUSION

Concluding this section by way of summary, we have seen the emphasis on the control or subjugation of the waters as integral to the account of creation, highlighting the emergence of land (and eventually man) from those waters. Narratives of deliverance that parallel this cosmogony, such as the deluge (Gen 6-9) and sea crossing (Exod 14), may thus be said to portray a new creation or rebirth. It may also be the case that the “righteous” one(s), delivered through the waters to the mountain of God, is to be understood in terms of הַרְצֵנִי . Furthermore, the abundant life of the divine Presence symbolized by the river links the garden with Israel’s cultus, suggesting that cultus as the means for re-gaining paradise—a point to be developed below. Understood thus, the creation account may be said to prefigure the tabernacle cultus.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR WORSHIP: TO DWELL IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE

The imagery of Eden as a “world mountain,” notes Fishbane, wends its way through the times and places of Israelite history, and its persistence, which both lends coherence to the Bible and transfigures our understanding of the Bible-as-a-whole, suggests its significance for the ancient Israelites.¹⁰⁸ Having already made the case in the previous chapter that Eden may be seen as the archetypal cosmic mountain, we turn now to consider the cultic aspects of the creation narrative(s) one would expect to find, given that temples were architectural representations of the cosmic mountain. Scholars have, in fact, steadily come to appreciate that Genesis is more concerned with the cult than has previously been realized.¹⁰⁹ This discernment has come via the

¹⁰⁸ M. Fishbane, “The ‘Eden’ Motif/The Landscape of Spatial Renewal,” pp 111-20 in *Biblical Text and Texture* (New York: Schocken, 1979) 111-12. He notes how the “shards of Eden” are reassembled ironically by the builders of the Tower of Babel. Cf. also K.R.R. Gros Louis, “The Garden of Eden,” pp 52-58 in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives*, 57-8.

¹⁰⁹ G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice,” pp 93-102 in *Pomegranates & Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, A. Hurvitz, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 93. Wenham grounds this statement in (1) the Creation account’s foreshadowing of the building of the tabernacle; (2) the description of the Garden of Eden as a

growing acknowledgement of temple motifs in its narratives. Because mountains *were* the original “temples” in the ancient Near East,¹¹⁰ cosmic mountain ideology¹¹¹ is at the root of sanctuary motifs, the presence of a mountain in a narrative even serving as something of a clue that temple motifs are likely present.¹¹² In this section, we will consider how Genesis 1 depicts creation as a cosmic temple, Genesis 2 presents the garden of Eden as a Holy of holies atop a

sanctuary; (3) the prominence of sacrifice thematically in the Creation, Flood, and Abraham narratives—features that we will develop as well.

¹¹⁰ J.M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law in the Ancient Near East and in the Old Testament,” pp 272-94 in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994) 273. Lundquist further states that temple ideology was “central” to ancient Israel’s functioning as a society, and that seven motifs (of temple ideology) found in the Sinai narratives “can justifiably be shown to be early, probably dating back to the time of Moses himself and to the Sinai experience” (280).

¹¹¹ The terminology “Temple ideology” may thus be utilized in alternation with “cosmic mountain ideology.” Even when “Temple ideology” is used, we do not mean that the ideology of Solomon’s Temple has been retrojected back into the literature and institutions of the Pentateuch (*Contra* M. Vervenne, “What Shall We Do With the Drunken Sailor? A Critical Re-Examination of Genesis 9.20-27,” *JSOT* 20.68 [1995] 33-55; R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 126. Cf. M. Haran, “The Nature of ‘Ohel Mo ‘edh’ in Pentateuchal Sources,” *JSS* 5 [1960] 50-65; *ibid.*, “The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle,” *HUCA* 36 [1965] 191-226; F.M. Cross, “The Priestly Tabernacle,” *Old Testament Issues* [New York: Harper, 1968] 39-67.).¹¹¹ While this certainly *may* be the case, yet, if one asks upon what foundation the mythopoeic concepts of the Solomonic Temple rests (i.e., that of the royal theology of “Zionism”), it will be seen to be the cosmic mountain ideology both widespread throughout the ancient Near East and which roots are found deep in pre-Israelite tradition. See R.J. Clifford’s *The Cosmic Mountain*, 1-97; J.D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48*, 14, 15, 17. Indeed, cosmic mountain ideology is evident in wall paintings of the Old Babylonian palace at Mari, dating to the 18th century B.C.E. (cf. J.-C. Margueron, “Mari: A Portrait in Art of a Mesopotamian City-State,” pp 892-93 in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, J.M. Sasson, ed. [New York: Scribner’s, 1995]; L.E. Stager, “Jerusalem as Eden,” 36-47).

¹¹² Thus this thesis is positioned within, and seeks to contribute toward the development of, “temple theology.” “Throughout the modern period...the role of the Temple in Israel’s life and its significance for New Testament theology has been ignored if not actively denigrated. The reasons for this modern marginalization of Temple are not hard to see. Among others, the Jewish Old Testament scholar J.D. Levenson has clearly seen the problem, and his essays *Sinai and Zion* and *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton: Princeton U Press, 1988) are classic and seminal attempts to rehabilitate the relevance of the Temple for biblical theology. He, and a growing number across the Old Testament, post-biblical and New Testament disciplines are now recognizing both the centrality of the Temple for Israel’s life and practice and that the Temple cult stands at the centre of a complex of cosmological mythology” (C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest: Towards an Historical and Theological Account of the Incarnation,” pp 81-99 in *Heaven on Earth* 81-82). Our own thesis posits the water-ordeals or “baptisms” of the Torah are best understood within this “complex of cosmological mythology.” R.M. Davidson (“Cosmic Metanarrative for the Coming Millenium,” *JATS* 11.1-2 [2000] 102-19) notes the prominence of the temple theme in Scripture: “Some 45 chapters in the Pentateuch are devoted exclusively to the Sanctuary building and rituals; some 45 chapters in the Prophets deal directly with the Sanctuary; and the whole book of Psalms—the Temple Hymnal—with explicit references to the Sanctuary averaging one per psalm. The New Testament has similar Sanctuary saturation, with profuse allusions to Sanctuary terminology and ritual as fulfilled in Jesus. Whole NT books are structured around the Sanctuary, such as the Gospel of John, the book of Hebrews, and the Book of Revelation. It could forcefully be argued that there is more material on the Sanctuary in Scripture than any other subject” (104-05). See the very brief overview, “Sanctuary Ideology in the Ancient Near East” in J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on an Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (JSOTSup 395; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 141-44.

paradisiacal mountain, and describes humanity as a priesthood.¹¹³ The expulsion of Genesis 3, then, would serve to explain the necessity of the tabernacle cultus for (re)entering the divine Presence. There are, moreover, several factors that would seem to justify the consideration of Gen 1-3 jointly,¹¹⁴ with 2.4 serving as a “Janus” bridge, “the heavens and the earth” carrying forward Gen 1.1 by recall and the concluding reversed order possibly signaling a change in perspective.¹¹⁵ However, beyond acknowledged redactional intent whereby the two creation

¹¹³ J.L. Morrow similarly states: Gen 1-3, “in its account of creation, presents the cosmos as one large temple, the Garden of Eden as the Holy of holies, and the human person as made for worship” (“Creation and Liturgy: The Liturgical Background of Genesis 1-3,” a paper submitted at the Trends of Ancient Jewish and Christian Mysticism Seminar at the University of Dayton, February 26, 2008 [being a revision and expansion of a portion of the work presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego, November 2007]). Cf. J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 57-75 for a summary review of temple themes in the Garden of Eden. M. Eliade states: “The temple, the place sacred above all others, is the equivalent of its heavenly prototype –the Garden of Paradise” (*Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 282).

¹¹⁴ Attempts have been made to demonstrate structural, thematic, and lexical affinities between Gen 1 and 2-3. Cf. Z. Stefanovic, “The Great Reversal: Thematic Links between Genesis 2 and 3,” *AUSS* 32.1-2 (1994) 47-56; R. Ouro, “Linguistic and Thematic Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 3,” *JATS* 13.1 (2002) 44-54; W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2”; B. Och, “Creation and Redemption,” 229; U. Cassuto (*Genesis I*, 92-94) demonstrates a “clear intention to harmonize the two narratives,” basing his argument on the parallel emphasis on the creations of man and woman (1.26//2.18); use of special creation verbs for humanity (1.27//2.22); naming (1.5, 8, 10//2.19-20); numerical symmetry based on the number seven; and, thematically, the second account explaining how evil came into the world created “good” in the first account. Cf. also 40-1 and 102-3 for Cassuto’s demonstration of “seed” as a thematic link between the two accounts. Other thematic connections include: (1) life, expressed in Gen 2-3 particularly in relation to covenant fealty (cf. T.N.D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Gen 2-3* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007] 53ff); and (2) the mysterious origin of evil, expressed in 3.1 by the sudden appearance of the “serpent” (cf. T.N.D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative*, 80-84 for the “serpent” of Gen 3.1 in relation to the chaos battle drama of creation). On this second point, cf. M. Fishbane (*Biblical Text and Texture*, 22-23) who posits the serpent may “represent some fragment of the inchoate waste and void, that part of the world...resistant to a fixed order.” Cf. also W.H. Harper who considers the purpose of Gen 2 as addressing “that greatest problem of all life, the existence in the world of evil” (“The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence. Genesis II,” *The Biblical World* 3.2 [1894] 102); N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History* (New York: Schocken, 1966) 24. This answer, as we will seek to demonstrate below, is only partial. The Creation described in terms of a tabernacle, with humanity functioning as a priesthood, leads to an interpretation of the Fall beyond the origin and existence of evil to the necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. One might also add here the syntactic parallelism between Gen 1.1-3 and 2.4-8, which lead Otto to conclude the Eden narrative “ist der Eröffnung des priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungsbericht nachgestaltet” (E. Otto, “Die Paradieserzählung Gen 2-3: eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionshistorischen Kontext,” pp. 167-92 in “Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit...”: Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Weisheit. Festschrift D. Michel, ed. A.A. Diesel et al [BZAW 241; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996] 183 fn 16). Cf. W.H. Shea, “Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2,” 49-68 for an attempt “to demonstrate sufficient literary structural parallels between these two narrative [of Gen 1 and 2] to support their unity of authorship.”

¹¹⁵ Cf. B.K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*, 121-22; *Idem.*, *Genesis*, 79, 84; C.J. Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 108-09; R. Ouro, “The Garden of Eden Account: The Chiastic Structure of Genesis 2-3,” *AUSS* 40.2 (2002) 221-23; D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood,” 30; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 46. Not only may the reversed order of the chiasm possibly initiate a change of perspective, but the *lōl’qōt* may be

narratives are allowed to “generate both their meaning and their function within the context of the composition of Gen 1-3,” so that the theological significance of either can only be fully discerned within their relationship,¹¹⁶ the cosmic mountain will be seen to serve as a unifying ideology.¹¹⁷

utilized to function like a zoom-lens on a camera to focus the reader’s attention. If legitimate, this function of the *ṭōl’qōṭ* would explain one of the main contrasts between Gen 1 and 2-3, namely the generic nature of the first account and the individual style of the latter: the first chapter being an account of creation in general, the second being about the garden. Cf. T.D. Alexander, “Genealogies, Seed and the Compositional Unity of Genesis,” 259; B.J. Stratton, *Out of Eden*, 28-29; W.H. Harper, “The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence,” 99-106; B. Och, “The Garden of Eden: From Creation to Covenant,” *Judaism* 37.2 (1988) speaks of the “vertical movement” between God and creation in Gen 1, and the “horizontal perspective” of the Garden of Eden story (145 fn 2). Och also points out how in Gen 2.4b “earth” precedes “heaven” since “now it is man and his earthly existence which will be of primary concern. The focus has moved from heaven down to earth...” (147-48 fn 6). The movement from general to specific, moreover, is in line with I.M. Kikawada’s paper which, upon comparing *Enki and Ninmah*, *Atrahasis*, and Gen 1-2, suggests “there was in the Ancient Near East a literary convention of telling the story of the origin of mankind in a doublet. The first part of the story relates the creation of mankind in more general and abstract terms, whereas the second part of the story narrates it in more specific and concrete terms. The technique of bringing the two independent parts together into a unified narrative is quite similar to the way in which a bicolon in poetry is composed, namely, by the juxtaposition of two similar materials according to the principle of parallelism of the members” (“The Double Creation of Mankind in *Enki and Ninmah*, *Atrahasis* I 1-351, and *Genesis* 1-2,” pp. 169-74 in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood*, 169). Kikawada further adds that “there were more than a thousand years of literary tradition preceding the compilation of the biblical narrative during which the double creation story is used...” (174). Shea agrees: “General parallels can be drawn between *Atra-hasis* and Gen 1, Gen 2A, and Gen 2B. Both tell the story of man’s creation in more than one segment. This parallelism extends to the smaller units of the story...Such repetition in *Atra-hasis* is another example of the Semitic parallel writing style that is also found in Gen 1-2...This parallelism can be seen either in terms of smaller literary units, as is the case with *Atra-hasis* or Gen 1-2. When judged by the literary standards of its time and place, separating Gen 1 from Gen 2 and attributing them to different sources written down centuries apart appears artificial and arbitrary” (W.H. Shea, “A Comparison of Narrative Elements in Ancient Mesopotamian Creation-Flood Stories with Genesis 1-9,” *Origins* 11.1 (1984) 9-29, accessed at: www.grisda.org/origins/11009.htm).

¹¹⁶ M. Vervenne, “Genésis 1, 1-2, 4: The Compositional Texture of the Priestly Overture to the Pentateuch,” pp 35-79 in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, A. Wénin, ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 52. He further notes that Gen 2.4 functions as a “bridge-text with the narrative of Eden” (49). Cf. C.A. Simpson, “An Inquiry into the Biblical Theology of History,” 6. For the coherence of Gen 1-5, cf. E. Combs, “Has YHWH Cursed the Ground? Perplexity of Interpretation in Genesis 1-5,” pp 265-87 in *Ascribe to the LORD: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, L. Eslinger, G. Taylor, eds. (JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988); J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis* (EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) 62, 72, 80. For a summary of the critical issues involved, cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, xxv-xlii; *idem.*, “Genesis: An Authorship Study and Current Pentateuchal Criticism,” *JSOT* 42 (1988) 3-18; *idem.*, “Original Sin in Genesis 1-11,” *Churchman* 104.4 (1990) 309-21; R.N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (JSOTSup 53; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 17-131; R. Ouro, “The Garden of Eden Account,” 219-43. See also some of the ways Gen 2-3 provides thematic confirmation to Gen 1, M.M. Wilfong, “Human Creation in Canonical Context: Genesis 1.26-31 and Beyond,” pp 42-52 in *God Who Creates*. In his commentary (*Genesis* I, 90-91), Cassuto noted that when “we read the Torah as we have it, as a continuous narrative, we find no discrepancy between the earlier statement that at first the world was a mass of water [Gen 1.1-2.3], and what we are told about the dry land at the beginning of the present section [Gen 2.4-3.24].” Gen 2, he points out, “does not recapitulate” the first account, but picks up the story “at the closing phase of creation,” such “duplications” being “not at all incongruous to the Semitic way of thinking” (emphasis original). Thus H. Blocher (*In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* [Leicester: IVP, 1984] 27) refers to the accounts as “the two tablets.” C.G. Bartholomew (“The Theology of Place in Genesis 1-3,” pp 173-95 in *Reading*

A. The Cosmic Temple: Genesis 1

Toward elucidating the portrayal of the cosmos as a cosmic temple in Genesis 1, we will examine now various facets of the ANE context of the creation account, as well as its liturgical features and its parallels to the tabernacle construction narrative.

1. THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN CONTEXT

The meaning of Genesis 1 is specifically derived from and related to the cult,¹¹⁸ the relationship between cosmos and cult being common among the cultures of the ancient Near East:

The connection of cosmos and temple can be seen in Mesopotamian cosmological texts such as *Enuma Elish*, in Mesopotamian temple-building texts (esp. the Sumerian account of Gudea's temple project), in Ugaritic mythology concerning Baal's seeking a house for himself, and in Egyptian temple texts. These often portray the temple as related to the cosmic mountain or the first primeval hillock to emerge from the waters of chaos. The temple is portrayed as being in the center of the cosmos, with waters flowing forth from its midst.¹¹⁹

Given this association, Levenson sees the parallels between the creation and tabernacle narratives (to be considered below) not as "the invention of P but the distillate of a long tradition in the ancient Near East, which binds Temple building and world building."¹²⁰ Indeed, the temple was thought to be the center and mainstay of creation,¹²¹ with the whole stability of the

the Law: Essays in Honour of Gordon J. Wenham, G. McConville and K. Möller, eds. [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007] 184) states that "narratively, the move from Gen 1 to 2, rather than indicating a juxtaposition of two unrelated sources, involves a movement of progressive implacement culminating in the planting of Eden as the specific place in which the earthlings Adam and Eve are to dwell." Cf. also William H. Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 33-36; R.J. Clifford, "The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation," 522.

¹¹⁷ This would include the cosmic waters as a unifying theme, already discussed. Cf. G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," pp 399-404 in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood*, 404. J.N. Walton notes that in the sequence established in Genesis 1-3, the three major categories of ritual concern in the ancient world and the Bible are addressed, namely, sacred time, space, and status respectively ("Eden, Garden of," *DOTP* 205. See also *idem.*, *Genesis*, 180, for blessing as a link between Gen 1 and 2). Also notable, the Deluge narrative of Gen 6-9 parallels that of 1-3 *as a unity*. And in Ps 46 scholars have found allusions to both creation (the chaotic waters of v 4) and paradise (the life-giving waters of v 5), demonstrating their compatibility within a single discourse. Cf., e.g., S. Kelly, "Psalm 46: A Study in Imagery," 307-8.

¹¹⁸ R.B. Coote and D.R. Ord, *In the Beginning: Creation and the Priestly Story* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 49.

¹¹⁹ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 151. Cf. M. Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord—The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1.1-2.3," in *Mélanges biblique et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henrie Cazelles*, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor (Kivlevaer: Butzon & Bercker, 1981) 501: "In the Mesopotamian mythic tradition the creation of the world is connected with the building of a temple"; J.J. Niehaus, *Ancient Near Eastern Themes in Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008) 83-137; S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 88-94.

¹²⁰ J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *JR* 64.3 (Jul 1984) 287.

¹²¹ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 115 fn 150.

social order being dependent upon the cultus.¹²² The notion of “rest” climaxing the creation account, moreover, is one of the clues to this association, temples being built for the purpose of divine rest.¹²³ Moreover, the seven-day sequence of creation, being the common ANE period for temple-building/ dedication, has also led scholars to recognize that “creation in Genesis 1 uses the language of temple-building.”¹²⁴ In the Baal Cycle, for example, it takes seven days to build the house of Baal in the heights of *Šapân*.¹²⁵ The same septadic pattern is evident within the bounds of the Hebrew Bible itself, in the accounts of the tabernacle (Exod 29.30, 35, 37, etc.) and of Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 6.38). The *Enuma elish*, as another example of relevant ANE literature, portrays creation not so much as a cosmogony but as a myth of the creation of a temple.¹²⁶ As we will discuss near the conclusion of this chapter, it may even be the case that the opening verse of the creation account in Gen 1 contains an allusion to temple-building, specifically in the “heaven and earth” merism for “the world.” Considering the heaven and earth/Jerusalem/holy mountain connection in Isaiah 65.17-25, Levenson writes:

YHWH is building a new Temple, therefore creating a new world, and vice versa. In light of Gösta Ahlström’s astute argument that Syro-Palestinian temples were meant to be “heaven and earth,” I am led to wonder whether “heaven and earth” in Isa 65.17 and elsewhere is not functioning as a name for the Jerusalem Temple. The Sumerian parallels are strong. The Temple at Nippur (and elsewhere) was called *Duranki*, “bond of heaven and earth,” and in Babylon we find *Etemenanki*, “the house where the foundation of heaven and earth is.” Perhaps it is not a coincidence that the Hebrew Bible begins with an account of the creation of

¹²² G.E. Wright, “The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East,” *BA* 7.4 (1944) 66-77 (67).

¹²³ J.H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East,” 60-61: “In the ancient world, the “rest” of the gods was always in a temple; in fact, temples were built with the purpose of deity resting in them. This rest of the gods often involved their taking control of the cosmos. A god could rest because order had been achieved and everything was now ready to run smoothly. Deities ran the cosmos from their temples...Consequently, when Genesis indicates that God rested on the seventh day, it tells us that in this account of the functional origins of the cosmos, the cosmos is being portrayed as a temple. This connection, which would have been transparent to the ancient audience, provides the key to understanding Genesis 1.” J. Laansma, as well, makes a strong case for understanding a temple metaphor as the clearest and most natural interpretation of the divine rest after creation (“*I Will Give You Rest*” [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997] 17-76).

¹²⁴ M.S. Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle: Volume One, Introduction with Text, Translation & Commentary of KTU 1.1-1.2* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 78. Cf. V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) 227; L.R. Fisher, “The Temple Quarter,” *JSS* 8 (1963) 40-41.

¹²⁵ Text 51.5.117. cf. R.L. Fisher, “The Temple Quarter,” 40.

¹²⁶ J.Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory* (Leiden: Brill, 1978) 99.

heaven and earth by the command of God (Gen 1.1) and ends with the command of the God of heaven “to build him a Temple in Jerusalem” (2 Chron 35.23). It goes from creation (Temple) to Temple (creation) in twenty-four books.¹²⁷

The creation account, to summarize, may be positioned within the general ANE understanding of creation as primarily related to the temple cult,¹²⁸ with the “face value” reading of Genesis 1 regarding the cosmos in terms of a large temple.¹²⁹ “Indeed, the act of creation may have been identified with the building of the temple-palace, as it was in both Mesopotamia and Canaan; the building of the temple was the climactic act of sovereignty asserted in creation.”¹³⁰

2. THE COSMOLOGY OF ANCIENT ISRAEL: GOD’S THREE-DECKED HOUSE

Understanding creation as a grand temple requires an appreciation for the cosmology of ancient Israel in which the world was thought of as a three-storied house. Generally, ANE cultures conceived of the universe as a tri-partite structure consisting of heaven (the abode of the gods), earth (the abode of humanity), and the watery underworld (the abode of the dead).¹³¹ The

¹²⁷ J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” 295. Beale affirms this connection in his article, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 192-93. For how the Book of Revelation closes with a vision of the new cosmos (temple), cf. R.D. Draper and D.W. Parry, “Seven Promises to Those Who Overcome: Aspects of Genesis 2-3 in the Seven Letters,” in *The Temple in Time and Eternity*, D.W. Parry and S.D. Ricks, eds. (Provo, Utah: FARM, 1999), accessed at: <http://farms.byu.edu/books/?bookid=21&chapid=107>. Also, the phrase “Maker of heaven and earth” (whether ascribed to El Elyon or Yahweh) is likely a “formulaic structure in cultic contexts (Pss 115.15; 124.8; 134.4; 146.6; 121.2),” perhaps functioning “as a traditional liturgical formula for evoking the blessing of God in worship” (N.C. Habel, “‘Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth’: A Study in Tradition Criticism,” *JBL* 91.3 [1972] 323-24, 327). Beyond the isolated phrase, some take “the opening introduction in Gen 1.1 as an independent statement, perhaps one in widespread devotional use in the writer’s culture when worshipping with due contemplation of observable creation... ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,’ reviews and reinforces what was already a well-known devotional concept within a Sabbath-keeping readership...” (P. Elbert, “Genesis 1 and the Spirit: A Narrative-Rhetorical Ancient Near Eastern Reading in Light of Modern Science,” *JPT* 15.1 [2006] 26 and fn 5). Cf. B.K. Waltke (“The Creation Account in Genesis 1.1-3, Part V: The Theology of Genesis 1—Continued,” *BibSac* 133 [1976] 28-41) who compares Gen 1 and Ps 104, stating: “The purpose of creation is doxological: ‘Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, Thou art very great’ (v 1)” (36).

¹²⁸ Coote and Ord, *In the Beginning*, 95.

¹²⁹ J.H. Walton states that the “face value” of the creation account “contains at least a strong undercurrent of God’s setting up a cosmos intended to function...as a sanctuary for himself. He furbishes it, puts people in it, and takes up his repose (Sabbath) in 1.1-2.3; then he sets up Eden along the lines of the Most Holy Place” (*Genesis*, 147-48). See the rest of his discussion on 147-51 for the relation of cosmos and temple in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. For the temple as the *imago mundi*, see M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (New York: Harer & Row, 1959) 17.

¹³⁰ J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 52.

¹³¹ L.E. Toombs, “Baal, Lord of the Earth: The Ugaritic Baal Epic,” pp 613-23 in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday*, C.L. Meyers, M.

“heavens and the earth”¹³² thus form a three-decked house of God, comprised of heaven-earth-water.¹³³

The triad of heaven, earth, and sea appears quite frequently (Pss 8.7-8; 33.6-8; 36.5-6; 69.34; 96.11; 104.1b-2b; 135.6; 146.6). In the triad, the world of the dead may replace the sea via the concept of the primeval flood (*thm*) inherent in the ocean (Ps 115.15-17). ...In the OT, the third place is normally taken by the sea (*ym*), and not by the primeval ocean (*thm*) or the world of the dead (*š'wl*).¹³⁴

This idea clarifies the use of architectural verbs employed in the account. It has been noted, for example, that the creation account presents God as a workman or artificer who builds, inspects,

O'Connor, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 618. Cf. L.I.J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World*, 126; O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 35-47. W.R. Smith writes on the similarities between Hebrew cosmology and that of the Babylonians: “By the heavens the Babylonians, like the Hebrews, understand the visible firmament, the dome which is spread out over the habitable earth “like a curtain...like a tent to dwell in” (Isa 40.22). To both nations the dome of heaven is a solid sphere (*rāqī'a*) on which the heavenly bodies move. Beyond this dome are waters, which would fall on the earth and submerge it, if the windows of heaven were opened. As there are waters above the heavens, so in like manner the earth rests on waters and is bounded on all sides by the circumambient ocean, Apsu. The Apsu also extends beneath the earth, for example as in Ps 24.2 the earth is founded upon the seas. The cosmos, therefore, in the old Semitic view is an enclosed space between the outspread earth and the domed heaven, surrounded on all sides by an unlimited expanse of water. The problem of creation is to explain how this region, cut off from the dark primordial ocean and instinct with light and life, took its beginning” (*Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, Second and Third Series*, John Day, ed. [JSOTSup 183; Sheffield, 1995] 99-100). Smith is also keen on the differences: “The simple and grand cosmogony of Genesis 1 has no parallel among the heathen Semites because none of them has such a conception of God the creator...But the resemblance [between Hebrew and Babylonian cosmogonies] has been greatly exaggerated and the unity of the story in which the whole creation appears as one progressive and well-ordered work of God is not borrowed from Babylon, while the lesson of the story which makes it fit to stand at the head of the record of Revelation and Redemption is entirely foreign to Semitic heathenism” (97). Smith’s statement also avoids the other extreme of positing the Creation account merely in terms of an anti-Babylon polemic. Cf. J.C. Gertz, “Antibabylonische Polemik im priesterlichen Schöpfungsbericht?” *ZThK* (2009) 137-55.

¹³² The merism “heavens and earth” often excludes the third element, sea, as being “a far less necessary, independent, and positive element than the other two,” most often “perceived as a threat to the fixed and ordered world of heaven and earth” because of its association with the realm of the dead (O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 30).

¹³³ Cf. also J.B. Jordan, *Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the World* (Brentwood: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1988) 41-51, 144-47; the panels in B.W. Anderson’s “Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story,” 156-59; Stadelmann’s *The Hebrew Conception of the World* which covers thoroughly each of the levels; L. Jacobs, “Jewish Cosmology,” pp 66-84 in *Ancient Cosmologies*, C. Blacker, M. Loewe, eds. (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975).

¹³⁴ O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 35. R. Ouro, “The of Genesis 1.2: Abiotic or Chaotic? Part I,” 265 also notes the “tri-polar view” of the cosmos in Old Testament literature: “for instance, heaven-earth-sea (Ex 20.11; Gen 1.10, 20 and others); heaven-earth-water beneath the earth (Ex 20.4; Deut 5.8).”

pronounces on his work, and then takes his Sabbath rest.¹³⁵ The Hebrew Bible, to be sure, is replete with descriptions of

creation as a tabernacle which God has pitched (cf. Psalm 104; Job 9.8; Isa 40.22) or a house which God has established (with pillars, windows, and doors; Job 26.11; Gen 7.11; Ps 78.23). Consequently, the temple of Zion, as a sanctuary which God has established, becomes a microcosmic metaphor for creation itself. This idea finds explicit expression in Ps 78.69: "And he built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which he has founded forever."¹³⁶

Later interpreters of Scripture, such as Josephus for example, understood the tripartite structure of the tabernacle to signify "the earth [=holy place] and the sea [=courtyard], since these too are accessible to all, but the third portion [=holy of holies] he reserved for God alone, because heaven also is inaccessible to men" (*Ant.* III:181; cf. *Ant.* III:123).¹³⁷ Barker quotes a similar second century AD tradition: "The house of the holy of holies was made to correspond to the highest heaven. The outer Holy House was made to correspond to the earth, and the courtyard was made to correspond to the sea...."¹³⁸ Later, we will return to this three-fold cosmology and its relevance for understanding the tabernacle/temple cultus.

3. THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN "KINGSHIP PATTERN"

The establishing of creation as a macro-temple positions the account within the genre of the so-called *Chaoskampf*, albeit thoroughly demythologized from the start, the main elements of which are: (1) the struggle against chaos personified by water; (2) victory over the chaos-waters by the deity who is consequently acclaimed king; (3) the enthronement of the king in his palace (temple).¹³⁹ These elements, moreover, figure prominently in the temple liturgies of Israel.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵ R.P. Gordon, "The Week That Made the World: Reflections on the First Pages of the Bible," pp 228-41 in *Reading the Law: Studies in Honor of Gordon J. Wenham*, J.G. McConville, K. Müller, eds. (NY; London: T & T Clark, 2007) 234-35; M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 13.

¹³⁶ W.A. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 54.

¹³⁷ Cf. G.K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse," 193-94.

¹³⁸ M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 65 (quoted from R. Patai, *Man and Temple in Jewish Myth and Ritual* [London, 1928] 108).

¹³⁹ D.J. McCarthy, S.J., "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," pp 74-89 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, 74, 85.

That God should build his house after conquering the waters of chaos conforms, then, to the overall ANE “kingship pattern,” whereby conquest results in sanctuary-building. Further, the Psalms also demonstrate the idea of YHWH’s kingship being tied to his reigning over the unruly, raging sea (cf. Pss 18, 29, 89, 93, 104),¹⁴¹ so that one might expect sanctuary-building upon the conquering of the watery abyss of Gen 1.2. The emphasis on building the sanctuary as the climax of creation, notes Blenkinsopp, serves to provide Israel “with its own highly unique and appropriate version of creation as a foundation or charter myth for the rebuilt sanctuary and the cult which was to be carried out in it.”¹⁴²

4. THE LITURGICAL CHARACTER OF THE CREATION ACCOUNT

The vast majority scholars recognize the liturgical character of the creation narrative.¹⁴³ One aspect of this consensus relates to the liturgical use of creation stories, which appears to have been common throughout the ancient Near East, evident in Mesopotamia, Persia, and in Israel at least during the Second Temple period.¹⁴⁴ In reference to creation within a worship setting, B.W. Anderson helpfully, and summarily, writes:

The setting of creation faith within worship is clearly evident in Psalm 24, which undoubtedly was once used in connection with a processional bearing of the ark into Jerusalem during a great pilgrimage festival celebrating Yahweh’s kingship...In this liturgical setting the function of creation language is to give the

¹⁴⁰ H.G. May, “Pattern and Myth in the Old Testament,” *JR* 21.3 (1941) 285-99 (295); B.W. Anderson, “Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship.”

¹⁴¹ R. Luyster, “Wind and Water,” 2-4.

¹⁴² J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” 286.

¹⁴³ W. Vogels, “The Cultic and Civil Calendars of the Fourth Day of Creation (Gen 1.14b),” *SJOT* 11.2 (1997) 168.

¹⁴⁴ S.D. Ricks, “Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East,” pp 118-25 in *Temple of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, D. Parry, ed. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994). Ricks further notes: “It has been suggested that the creation account of Genesis 1.1-2.4 was used in the temple liturgy of Israel at the New Year’s Festival before the Babylonian exile, when the enthronement of the Lord was celebrated, and possibly on other occasions as well. The didactic-liturgical nature of the creation account itself, with its constant refrains, ‘and God saw that it was good,’ ‘and the evening and the morning were the first day,’ etc., strengthens the case for its ritual use” (120). He also correctly states, however, that the absence of any “order of service” manuals, as found in Mesopotamia, means such a suggestion, while attractive, must remain tentative. L.R. Fisher, further, suggests similarities between the biblical Creation account and an Ugaritic cultic text that ends each section with the refrain “day one,” “day two,” etc. (“An Ugaritic Ritual and Genesis 1.1-5,” *Ugaritica* 6 [1969] 197-205). Similarly, N. Wyatt states: “Genesis 1 certainly exhibits a distinctive prose style, with its constant, refrain-like repetition of many phrases, as though it served a liturgical purpose” (“The Darkness of Genesis 1.2,” 100).

grounds for praising God. The worshiping community confesses that the earth, and all the creatures it contains, belongs solely to Yahweh, for Yahweh is Creator and King. God's power upholds the world, and God's purpose gives meaning to existence. Thus in the book of Psalms the affirmation that God is the Creator is the Venite, a call to worship...The *form* of the story [of Genesis 1], however, suggests that it was shaped by liturgical usage over a period of many generations, perhaps in connection with one of the great pilgrimage festivals of Israel. This is the way Paul Humbert reads the story...[Humbert] suggests that the Genesis story is structured in a seven-day scheme not to accommodate an ordinary week but to reflect the *festal week*, the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles with which the New Year begins...Quite apart from the question as to whether Genesis 1, on the analogy of the Babylonian creation story, is a festal legend, there should be general agreement on the fundamental point: the Priestly account of creation, like the creation psalms of the Psalter, is a sublime expression of Israel's praise. The creation story is most at home in a setting of worship.¹⁴⁵

However, quite aside from any suggested *Sitz im Leben*, discerning its liturgical character begins with recognizing that the creation account possesses a heptadic structure: beginning with a seven-word sentence, developed through seven paragraphs, and climaxing on the consecration of the Sabbath where the "seventh" day is given three-fold emphasis.¹⁴⁶ Yet, while "the distinctive aspect of the great cosmogony of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is its heptadic structure,"¹⁴⁷ the dominant role of the seventh day,¹⁴⁸ the climax of the narrative standing between creation and history,¹⁴⁹ in the creation account is rarely appreciated.¹⁵⁰ The seventh day, beyond its three-fold repetition, is also emphasized by means of complementary positive and negative statements.¹⁵¹ The Sabbath, then,

¹⁴⁵ B.W. Anderson, "Creation Faith in its Setting of Worship," 208-11. Anderson further relates Gen 1 to Ps 8 as a witness to the meaning of creation faith in the liturgy of Israel's worship (214).

¹⁴⁶ Cf. also J.L. Morrow, "Creation and Liturgy," 1-4.

¹⁴⁷ J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 100.

¹⁴⁸ J. Moskala, "The Sabbath in the First Creation Account," *JATS* 13.1 (2002) 55.

¹⁴⁹ W.R. Harper, "The First Hebrew Story of Creation," 9.

¹⁵⁰ So, too, J.H. Walton notes that the "key to understanding the intrinsic nature of the Genesis cosmology is in an element that is often neglected, the seventh day" ("Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East," 60).

¹⁵¹ B.W. Anderson, "A Stylistic Study of the Priestly Creation Story," 159-60: "Picking up the previous verb (*way'kullû*) at the end of 2:1, though modulating it from the passive to the active (*way'kal*), he states positively that God brought his work to completion; and, with rhetorical balance, he states negatively that God ceased from the work that he made. This balancing of the positive and the negative...is continued in the next line which speaks about the blessing of the seventh day and also about its removal from the profane sphere, that is, its sanctification. Thus positive and negative statements complement each other, and the epilogue is rounded off with a motive clause, introduced by the particle *kî* ("for")....The final words, *šer-bārā' lōhîm la'šōt* (literally: "which God created to make") are difficult to render smoothly into English. The sensitive reader of the Hebrew, however, will sense that the clause echoes the *bārā' lōhîm* of the superscription (1:1) and at the same time recalls the usage of both verbs, *bārā'* and *āšā*, in the main body of the story." In a similar vein, J.D. Levenson (*Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 100) writes: "The most reasonable conclusion is that P reflects its momentous decision to organize its creation story around the Sabbath in the several other less obvious heptads that appear in the text. As a result, both overtly and covertly, the text of Genesis 1.1-2.3 points to the seventh day as the clue to the meaning of creation. The Priestly

being the conclusion, culmination, and witness to God's work of creation,¹⁵² as well as the *telos* of creation¹⁵³ (to be discussed further below), lends a liturgical *purpose* to the narrative¹⁵⁴ so that it may even—and justly—be called the “cosmic liturgy of the seventh day.”¹⁵⁵ Thus may one come full-circle to understanding Genesis 1 “as a thoroughly liturgical text,” situating its *Sitz im Leben* in “the priestly theology of the cult.”¹⁵⁶

Beyond the heptadic structure and emphasis upon the Sabbath, the repetitive nature of the creation account is suggestive of a liturgy,¹⁵⁷ its majesty and rhythm possessing a liturgical cadence greater than the sum of its parts.¹⁵⁸ B.W. Anderson notes “the numerous affinities,”

theology of creation is inextricably associated with the observance of the Sabbath. And inasmuch as it is the P creation story which now serves as the overture to the entire Bible, dramatically relativizing the other cosmogonies, it is fair to say that the text of the Hebrew Bible in the last analysis forbids us to speak of the theology of creation without sustained attention to the sabbatical institution.”

¹⁵² M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 11.

¹⁵³ E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn,” 57-8.

¹⁵⁴ W.R. Harper, “The First Hebrew Story of Creation,” 11-12 (NOTE: double emphasis original). Cf. E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn,” 57-8. S.E. Balentine similarly writes that it “is the seventh day, then, that holds the key to the liturgy of creation,” being a day “lifted up from the previous six days” (*The Torah's Vision of Worship* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999] 92, 93).

¹⁵⁵ M. Vervenne, “Genesis 1, 1-2, 4: The Compositional Texture of the Priestly Overture to the Pentateuch,” pp 35-79 in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, 45, 48, 53. So, too, S.E. Ballentine; “In the Torah's vision,” then, “the world is created as part of a grand, cosmic liturgical celebration” (*The Torah's Vision of Worship* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999] 63).

¹⁵⁶ C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The Worship of Divine Humanity as God's Image and the Worship of Jesus,” pp 112-28 in *The Jewish Roots of Christological Monotheism: Papers from the St. Andrews Conference on the Historical Origins of the Worship of Jesus*, C.C. Newman, J.R. Davila, G.S. Lewis, eds. (SJSJ 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 123. Cf. also M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 510: “[I]t seems to us that the *Sitz im Leben* of Gen 1.1-2.3 is indeed cultic-liturgic.” Somewhat more cautiously, G.M. Landes writes: “The *Sitz im Leben* for Gen 1 is...difficult to ascertain with any assurance. Its original setting was perhaps cultic, celebrating not only the Creator-God and his creation works, but also the climactic event of the cessation of creation activity, which Israelite tradition related to the institution of the sabbath.” (“Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8.22-31 and Genesis 1,” 280).

¹⁵⁷ D.E. Callender, Jr., *Adam in Myth and History: Ancient Israelite Perspectives on the Primal Human* (Harvard Semitic Studies 48; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 23. More cautious, J.D. Levenson concedes “Genesis 1 also has a certain liturgical flavor,” adding, “but its style is far from hymnic” (*Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 58). J.L. Morrow, however, finds a hymnic structure precisely in what Levenson calls the “highly regular and repetitive description of the process of creation” (“Creation and Liturgy,” 4 fn 10). Interestingly, and though he categorizes Gen 1 as “report,” the absence of plot and other narrative features leads G.W. Coats to suggest the creation account has more in common with the genre of hymns or wisdom tradition (*Genesis*, 47).

¹⁵⁸ E.C. Brisson, “The Gates of Dawn,” 56. C. Westermann finds the rhythmic structure of the “first chapter of the Bible strikes one...like a mysterious song, like a festal celebration – one could almost say, like a heavenly liturgy. With solemn, ponderous rhythm the same phrases keep reappearing throughout the entire chapter. It affects one as a litany” (*The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 6). This comports with M. Weinfeld's opinion, who suggests the

structural and linguistic, between Gen 1 and Ps 104 (certainly utilized liturgically): seven strophes that parallel the sequence of events in the creation story, with an introductory invocation echoed by a concluding refrain.¹⁵⁹ These liturgical features, then, contribute toward positioning creation in Genesis 1 within the context of a temple.

5. TABERNACLE CONSTRUCTION PARALLELS

That the heptadic structure of Gen 1 contributes to a liturgical framework is reinforced through the parallel structure of the building of the tabernacle in Exodus.¹⁶⁰ “Moses’ going up to the Mountain, which comes mainly in order to receive the instructions concerning the construction of the Tabernacle (cp. Ex 25.9, 40; 26.30; 27.8; Num 8.4),” notes Weinfeld, “was bound up with a waiting of six days, similar to the six days required in order to bring the work of creation to completion.”¹⁶¹ Kearney has argued, further, that each of the seven speeches of Exod 25-31 alludes to the corresponding day of creation in Gen 1-2.3:¹⁶²

“recurring formulas...are a type of refrain which imparts to the chapter a liturgic character” (“Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 510. Cf. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 11).

¹⁵⁹ B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” 11. Cf. P. Humbert (“La relation de Genèse 1 et du Psaume 104 avec la liturgie du Nouvel-An israélite,” in *Opuscles d'un hébraïsant* [Neuchâtel: Université de Neuchâtel, 1958] 60-83) who argues that both Gen 1 and Ps 104 were utilized in the Jerusalem Temple cultus. Having noted many of these features in the nineteenth century, A. Briggs argued that Gen 1 is a poem (“The Hebrew Poem of Creation,” 273-288). He offers eight characteristic features shared by Hebrew poetry and the Creation account: (1) Parallelism, (2) even and regular measurement of lines by words or word accents, (3) archaic words, (4) strophical organization, (5) catch-words or secondary refrains, (6) poetic license in use of archaic endings, (7) simple, graphic, and ornate language and style, (8) harmonious (though monotonous in prose) organization of the strophes. Certainly, the “text intentionally uses the poetry of repetition” (L. Schottroff, “The Creation Narrative: Genesis 1.1-2.4a,” 28). H. Blocher refers to the text as a “hymn-narrative” (*In the Beginning*, 52).

¹⁶⁰ Cf. J. Blenkinsopp (“The Structure of P,” 275) who makes the point that the “formulaic and programmatic character of the work [of P] has also made it easier to find clues at the linguistic and structural levels to the intentions built into the work.” C. Westermann (*The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 7-11) points out that the same rhythmic pattern of creation (Announcement/Command/Report/Evaluation/Temporal Framework), “with some variations, can be observed in the large legal complex stretching from Exodus 25, through Leviticus, to Numbers 10.” For a brief summary of what follows, cf. Coote and Ord, *In the Beginning*, 95-97; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 12.

¹⁶¹ M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 506.

¹⁶² P.J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25-40,” pp. 375-387 in *ZAW* 89.3 (1977) 375-78. He further notes that P’s redaction “with its emphasis on the creation theme in Ex 25-31, appears to be the formation of a sequence ‘creation-fall-restoration’ as the unifying framework of Ex 25-40” (383). Cf. also S.E. Ballentine, *Torah’s Vision of Worship*, 64, 67-68, 138-40; M. Bauks, “Genesis 1 als Programmschrift der Priesterschaft (P⁸),”

- (1) Speech one//Day one: As God brought *’ôr* (“light”) into darkness (Gen 1.2-3), so Aaron causes *mā’ôr* (“light”) to shine throughout the night (Ex 27.20). The passage about the incense altar (30.1-10) at the conclusion of the speech is also added, suggesting that the enactment of cult is an experience of God’s creative power.
- (2) Speech two//Day two: As God divided upper from lower, the dome separating the waters below from those *mē’al* (“above”), God’s second speech establishes a division into upper and lower, with taxes being paid by those twenty *wāmā’lā* (“and above”).
- (3) Speech three//Day three: That the making of the bronze laver is associated with the creation of the *hammayim* (“the seas,” Gen 1.9-10) is made explicit in 1 Kings 7.23 where it is called *hayyām* (“the sea”).
- (4) Speech four//Day four: Ps 89 underscores the idea of permanence for “holy anointing oil” (Ex 30.22-33), specifically in reference to David’s line which shall be like the sun and moon, thereby forging a link to God’s activity on the fourth day.
- (5) Speech five//Day five: The mollusk utilized for making sacred incense (Ex 30.34-38) is tied to the creation of swimming creatures (Gen 1.21).
- (6) Speech six//Day six: Ex 31.1-1 designates those who will supervise and carry out the manufacture of the tent and its accessories, corresponding to the sixth day’s creation of man who will have dominion over the temple of creation. Bezalel is filled with the *rûaḥ ’lōhîm* (“spirit of God”) in Ex, an expression harkening back to Gen 1.2.¹⁶³
- (7) Speech seven//Day seven: The seventh day of creation is recalled by prescribing the day of rest upon its foundation (Ex 31.17).

Rabbinic interpretation (*Mid. Rabb. Num* 12.13), also based on intertextual exegesis, had already discerned that “the tabernacle, which was a temple, was a microcosmic reproduction of God’s cosmic temple, the creation”:¹⁶⁴

pp 333-46 in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, ed. Wénin (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 342-43; G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (NSBT 17; Downers Grove, Apollos, 2004) 60-1; J. Blekinsopp, “Structure of P,” 275-92; U. Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 62; *idem.*, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1976 [1951]) 476-77, 483; M.G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 37-38, 41; J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 142-43; *idem.*, “The Temple and the World,” 286-87; *idem.*, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 78, 83-83; Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple, and Enthronement,” 502-3; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 35; *idem.*, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 23.

¹⁶³ J. Blekinsopp notes this intervention of the Spirit of God as one of the most important thematic associations between the accounts of Creation and the Tabernacle (“The Structure of P,” 281-82). Cf. also J.H. Sailhamer, “Exegetical Notes: Genesis 1.1-2.4a,” 82.

¹⁶⁴ J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 70.

Day	Creation	Tabernacle
Day 1	Heavens are stretched out like a curtain (Ps 104.2)	Tent (Ex 26.7)
Day 2	Firmament (Gen 1.2)	Temple veil (Ex 26.33) ¹⁶⁵
Day 3	Waters below firmament	Laver or bronze sea (Ex 26.33)
Day 4	Lights (Gen 1.14)	Light stand (Ex 25.31)
Day 5	Birds (Gen 1.20)	Winged cherubim (Ex 25.20)
Day 6	Man (Gen 1.27)	Aaron the high priest (Ex 28.1)
Day 7	Cessation (Gen 2.1) Blessing (Gen 2.3) Completion (Gen 2.2)	Cessation (Ex 39.32) Mosaic blessing (Ex 39.43) Completion (Ex 39.43)

Considering the parallel of Day 4, David J. Rudolph, taking into account “the weight of biblical exegesis and earlier sources,” makes the case for glossing מועדים as “festivals” in Gen 1.14:¹⁶⁶

The plural form of מועד means “festivals” one hundred percent of the time in the Torah. Moreover, and most important for this study, the exact lexical form of מועד in Genesis 1.14 (m.pl. w/ ל prep.) means “festivals” one hundred percent of the time in the Hebrew Bible; one instance (Ps 104.19) refers directly to Genesis 1.14. Literary context and ANE background bolster the “[cultic] festivals” reading. Genesis 1.1-2.3 is replete with priestly/liturgical language and *havdil* imagery. Among ANE creation accounts similar to Genesis 1, an Egyptian and Mesopotamian one (the *Enuma Elish*) were found which make reference to New Year festivals. Finally, Second Temple Jewish literature generally upholds the “festivals” translation.

Vogels notes that the singular מועד *mo'ed* refers, 135 out of the 160 times it appears in the Torah, to the “tent of *meeting*,” with the majority of the other cases referring either to the “fixed time” of a liturgical festival or as a synonym for the “festival” itself—never referring to the seasons of the year (winter, spring, etc.).¹⁶⁷ “Clearly, the word *mo'ed*,” Vogels concludes, “is part of priestly and liturgical language.”¹⁶⁸ He further notes the important stress on the function

¹⁶⁵ P.H. Seely (“The Firmament and the Water Above,” 40) also notes this parallel between creation and the tabernacle, the firmament being commissioned to “separate” (*hiphil* participle of ברל, *bdl*) the waters in Gen 1.7 and the veil performing the same function in Exod 26.33, to “separate” (*hiphil* qatal of ברל, *bdl*) the Holy Place from the Holy of holies.

¹⁶⁶ D.J. Rudolph, “Festivals in Genesis 1:14,” *TynBul* 54.2 (2003) 40. While some have linked this idea with the seventh day in Gen 2.1-3, D.C. Timmer (*Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath: The Sabbath Frame of Exodus 31:12-17; 35:1-3 in Exegetical and Theological Perspective* [Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009] 45) disagrees.

¹⁶⁷ W. Vogels, “The Cultic and Civil Calendars of the Fourth Day of Creation (Gen 1.14b),” *SJOT* 11.2 (1997) 164-65.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 166.

of these lights, the paragraph of the fourth day repeating “for” or “to” (*lamed*) eleven times.¹⁶⁹

Understanding the chief function of the מועדים as fixing the days of cultic celebration, Wenham notes the concentric structure of 1.14-18:¹⁷⁰

- A to divide the day from the night (14a)
- B for signs, for fixed times, for days and years (14b)
- C to give light on the earth (15)
- D to rule the day (16a) } God made the
- D' to rule the night (16b) } two lights
- C' to give light on the earth (17)
- B' to rule the day and the night (18a)
- A' to divide the light from the darkness (18b)

Paul Beauchamp, informed by such an elaborate structure, sees the fourth day as the structural and thematic center, corresponding both to the light of the first day and anticipating the religious *festivals* of the seventh day, for which signs the luminaries serve.¹⁷¹ This is in accord with Vogels's contention that “festivals” and “years” must be the central concept of the fourth day.¹⁷² Furthermore, “מאור ‘light, lamp’ is always used in the Pentateuch to designate the sanctuary lamp in the tabernacle.”¹⁷³ The use of מאור referring to the menorah that lights up the tabernacle “may then be our first clue that there is another whole dimension to this text that has often eluded

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 171. He further states that there are “seven functions, a number which is central to the main theme of the priestly creation narrative (7 days) but also to many of its details” (172).

¹⁷⁰ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis*, 21-23. Cf. also Vogels, “The Cultic and Civil Calendars,” 172.

¹⁷¹ P. Beauchamp, *Création et séparation: étude exégétique du premier chapitre de la Genèse* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, Cer, Delachaux & Niestlé, Desclée de Brouwer, 1969) 67f.

¹⁷² W. Vogels, “The Cultic and Civil Calendar,” 174. He too acknowledges the structural significance of the fourth day: “if one regards the story as a presentation of a seven day week, then the fourth day stands in the *middle*. It is really *Mittwoch*, both preceded and followed by three other days....Moreover, the number four has in itself symbolic meaning. It is a cosmic number: the four corners of the world, the four seasons, the four rivers of the garden of Eden (Gen 2.10). We have seen there is a clear link between the first day and the fourth day [vocabulary: light, darkness, day, night, separate], but there is also a connection with the seventh day. These three days are concerned with time. The narrative begins with time, mentions time in the middle and ends with time. This gives a triangular structure 1 – 4 – 7....On the fourth day (1.14-19) this first division of time between day and night is confirmed, but something new is added: the distinction between a liturgical calendar with its festivals, and the civil calendar with its basic division of days and years....The sabbath belongs to the cultic calendar. The seventh day is one of these ‘festivals’ mentioned in the fourth day” (176-78).

¹⁷³ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis*, 22. This is also noted by Vogels: “The word *ma’or* = light, luminary is rare in the Bible. Generally it refers –and in the Torah always–, to the lamps of the sanctuary (Exod 25.6; 27.10; 35.8, 14, 28; 39.37; Lev 24.2; Num 4.9, 16)...The sun and moon are like sacred lamps in the sanctuary of the universe. A better translation would be: “Let there be lamps...”, or “luminaries.” This word confirms the liturgical character of the narrative” (“The Cultic and Civil Calendar,” 175).

us: the description of the cosmos as a temple or sanctuary of God.”¹⁷⁴ Fletcher-Louis remarks on how the menorah’s being tended in the “evening” and the “morning” was a cultic action marking the primal boundary of the creation of light on the first day so that the high priest’s role in the cult-as-microcosm mimics the Creator’s in the cult-as-macrocosm.¹⁷⁵ The movement of creation week, then, goes from establishing the period of days (day one) to creating lamps as signs for “festivals” (day four) to consecrating *the* cultic day (the seventh day).¹⁷⁶

Finally, the tabernacle’s consecration process, lasting seven days, involves a heptadic pattern similar to the creation account, and which is also connected to the Sabbath.¹⁷⁷ Moshe Weinfeld, in his important 1981 study, demonstrated key lexical correspondences between the completion of creation and the completion of the tabernacle.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 124.

¹⁷⁵ C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest,” 90.

¹⁷⁶ D.C. Timmer (*Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 63), rather cautiously, writes: “Other than the intriguing reference to cultic time markers in Gen 1.14, the seventh day of the creation week is the first item that the [Hebrew Bible] places in the semantic field of holiness.”

¹⁷⁷ J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 5. J.D. Levenson underscores the importance of the Sabbath ordinance in this connection: “Thus, the account of the construction of the Tabernacle is punctuated by the injunction to observe the Sabbath in *imitatione Dei* (Ex 31.12-17, 35.1-3). The two institutions, each a memorial and, more than that, an actualization of the aboriginal creative act, are woven together not in a purposeless, mindless redaction but in a profound and unitive theological statement. Sabbath and sanctuary partake of the same reality; they proceed, *pari passu*, from the same foundational event, to which they testify and even provide access. In a cryptic apodictic pronouncement in Leviticus, they appear twice as if they were formulaic pairs: ‘My Sabbaths you are to observe/And my Sanctuary you are to revere: I am YHWH’ (Lev 19.30, 26.2)” (“The Temple and the World,” 288). Cf. also Paul Elbert, “Genesis 1 and the Spirit: A Narrative-Rhetorical Ancient Near Eastern Reading in Light of Modern Science,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15.1 (2006) 27ff.

¹⁷⁸ M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 503. He further states: “Gen1.1-2.3 and Ex 39.1-40.33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it. Most importantly, the expression of these ideas in both accounts overlaps.” These connections had already been noted by B. Jacob, *Das Buch Genesis* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1934) and M. Buber, “Der Mensch von heute und die Jüdische Bibel,” in *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung*, M. Buber, F. Rosenzweig, ed. (Berlin: Schocken, 1936) 13-45. Cf. also J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” 280; J.D. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 142-43; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 130: “The verb *rûah* is used in the Bible [in Ps 132.8] to describe the coming to rest of the Ark (and presumably of the Tent in Num 10.35)”; P. Enns (*Exodus*, 552) who also sees the specificity and detail of the Tabernacle instruction/construction as a subtle allusion to the orderliness of the Creation account. N. Leibowitz points to similar comparisons by Abranavel and Rashi (*Studies in Shemot: Part Two*, A. Newman, trans. [Jerusalem: World Zionist Assoc., 1983] 479).

GENESIS 1-2	EXODUS 39-40
1.31: And God saw all that He had made [כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה] – look [וַיַּרְא], it was very good.	39.43: And Moses saw all the work [כָּל-הַמְלָאכָה] –look, they had done it [וַיַּרְא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה]; as the Lord had commanded, so had they done it.
2.1: Thus the heavens and the earth and all [וְכָל] their hosts were finished [וַיֵּכֶלֶם].	39.32: Thus all the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was finished [וַיֵּכֶלֶם כָּל].
2.2: And God finished [וַיֵּכֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים]...all His work which He did [כָּל-מַלְאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה].	40.33: So Moses finished the work [וַיֵּכֶלֶם מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הַמְלָאכָה].
2.3: And God blessed...[וַיְבָרֶךְ].	39.43: Moses blessed [וַיְבָרֶךְ] them.
2.3: And God...sanctified it [וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ].	40.9: ...to sanctify [וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ] it and all its furnishings.

The parallels thus established, when YHWH fills the tabernacle, this is a sign that a new creation has been achieved.¹⁷⁹ Conversely, however, we may also conclude that creation is portrayed as the completion of a cosmic temple,¹⁸⁰ as Fletcher-Louis competently sums it: “The cumulative effect of this intratextuality is to place cosmogony in the context of liturgy and to define the Tabernacle as a microcosm of the universe.”¹⁸¹ Indeed, creation likened to a temple has been considered “the most fundamental priestly aspect” of Gen 1.¹⁸² Creation in Genesis, we may thus conclude, is described as a temple, constructed as an ANE temple would be constructed.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ P.J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy,” 381.

¹⁸⁰ To be sure, an early Midrash equated the Tabernacle with the creation of the world, corresponding the first day of creation to the Holy of holies, the second day to the veil, the third to the bronze laver, and the fourth to the seven-branched lampstand (Midrash *Tanhuma* 11.2, S.A. Berman, trans. [Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 1996]). The 6th century Egyptian Christian, Cosmas, noting the parallels between the Tabernacle construction and the Creation account, posited that Genesis 1 was itself the record of Moses’ vision of the heavenly “pattern” atop Sinai (Cosmas, books III, V in *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk*, J.W. McCrindle, trans. [London: Hakluyt Society, 1897] 110-11, 149-50).

¹⁸¹ C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case,” pp 161-93 in *SBL 1997 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 37; Atlanta: SBL, 1998) 187.

¹⁸² M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 108.

¹⁸³ J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 9-10. Cf. G.K. Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 51-58, 61-66, 63 fn 78 and 128; V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 335-37; P.J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy,” 384; J.D. Levenson, “Temple and the World,” 287-88; C.L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study of a Symbol from the Biblical Cult* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976) 172; M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and Enthronement,” 507. Beale (“The Final Vision of the Apocalypse”) offers ten “hints” that the Garden is to be seen as a temple: (1) God’s unique presence, “walking back and forth”/ *hithallek* parallels His presence in the tabernacle/ temple; (2) humanity’s commission to “serve and guard” (‘*abad* and *shamar*) parallels priestly duties; (3) the cherubim guarding the tree of life parallels their symbolic presence at the temple; (4) the “tree of life” probably parallels the menorah; (5) the edenic décor of the tabernacle/ temple; (6) Eden’s mountain location; (7) the river flowing out of Eden parallels the river of the eschatological temple; (8) the gold and precious stone parallels; (9) the tree of the knowledge of good and evil paralleled to the ark in the holy of holies; (10) the eastward orientation of the entrance to Eden and the tabernacle/ temple. R.M. Davidson (“Cosmic Metanarrative,” 102-19) who writes that “Moses under the inspiration of God clearly depicts the Garden of Eden as the first earthly *Sanctuary*” (108) lists seventeen intertextual parallels: (1) eastward orientation (Gen 2.8; cf. Exod 36.20-30, 1 Kgs 7.21, Ezek 47.1); (2)

This conclusion, furthermore, emphasizes a key point of focus in Gen 1: the theology of the divine Presence (in that temple/creation).¹⁸⁴

Having considered the creation account of Genesis 1 in terms of a cosmic temple, we turn now to consider the Eden account of Genesis 2-3 as something of an archetypal holy of holies.

B. *The Holy of Holies: Genesis 2-3*

And [Noah] knew that Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of YHWH.” *Jubilees* 8.19¹⁸⁵

Though for some time modern scholarship had not recognized “the relationship between the Eden narrative and the very important Canaanite mythic motif of the cosmic mountain,”¹⁸⁶ early exegesis did, and some modern studies have. Indeed, Wenham, based on the tabernacle symbolism found therein, considers a “cultic interpretation of Gen 2-3 more likely.”¹⁸⁷ His main points, based on lexical and thematic parallels, are summarized below:¹⁸⁸

- (1) The verb *hithallek*, meaning “to walk to and fro” (Gen 3.8), he notes “is used to describe the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries in Lev 26.12, Deut 23.15, 2 Sam 7.6-7. The LORD walked in Eden as he subsequently walked in the tabernacle.”
- (2) The cherubim (*kʿrubîm*) guarding the eastward entrance to the garden indicates “that it is viewed as a sanctuary, for *kʿrubîm*, Akkadian *kuribu*, were the traditional guardians of holy places in the ancient

God “plants” (*nāṭaʿ*) the garden in Eden (Gen 2.8) and Israel on his holy mountain sanctuary (Ex 15.17; cf. 1 Chr 17.9); (3) the tree of life “in the midst” (*betwēk*) of the garden (Gen 2.9) and God’s presence in the midst of His people in the Sanctuary (Ex 25.8); (4) God’s “walking around”/*hithallek* (Gen 3.8//Deut 23.14); (5) the river (Gen 2.10//Ezek 47.1-12); (6) precious metals/stones (Gen 2.12//Exod 25.7; 28.9, 20; 35.9, 27; 39.6, 13); (7) three tiered space; (8) verbal parallels between creation of cosmos and of tabernacle; (9) seven day structure of creation and building of tabernacle; (10) Levitical verbs “to serve and guard”; (11) light and the menorah (Gen 1.14-16//Ex 25.6; 35.14; 39.27, etc.); (12) edenic symbolism in the Sanctuary (Exod 25.31-40; cf. 1 Kgs 6.29, 32, 35; 7.26, 29, 36, 49); (13) God’s clothing Adam and Eve// priests (Gen 3.21//Lev 8.7, 13; Num 20.28; cf. Exod 28.4; 29.5; 40.14); (14) cherubim presence; (15) the cherubim are “placed” (*šākan*), used of God’s dwelling (Exod 25.8); (16) *šākan* is the same root for *Shekinah* glory, God’s visible presence in the sanctuary; (17) Adam and Eve worship God at eastern entrance/gate of Eden (for which, cf. J. Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise: A Contextual Interpretation of Gen 4.7,” *Biblische Notizen* 100 [1999] 45-59).

¹⁸⁴ See M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 14-17. 27-32. Smith notes that “within this Temple [of creation] the divine Presence is at work. Outside of this Temple are threats of cosmic waters (see Jonah 3.3-9)...” (16). He also, plausibly, regards the light of Gen 1.3 as a powerful statement of the divine Presence (71-79).

¹⁸⁵ “Jubilees,” trans. O.S. Wintermute, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, J.H. Charlesworth, ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) 73.

¹⁸⁶ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 189.

¹⁸⁷ G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 400. This extensive list, to be sure, justifies Wenham’s statement in his commentary: “Indeed, there are many...features of the garden that suggest it is seen as an archetypal sanctuary, prefiguring the later tabernacle and temples” (*Genesis 1-15*, 61). See W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 57-61.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 400-404.

- Near East. Further, the entrance to the tabernacle and Jerusalem temple were also entered from the east.¹⁸⁹ In Solomon's temple two *k'rubîm* guarded the inner sanctuary (1 Ki 6.23-28); and two others upon the ark formed God's throne within the inner sanctuary (Ex 25.18-22); and pictures of *k'rubîm* decorated the curtains of the tabernacle and walls of the temple (Ex 26.31; 1 Ki 6.29).
- (3) The fullness of life to be found in the sanctuary is symbolized by the tree of life in the garden. Not only were trees a regular feature of Abraham's worship (also being integral to Canaanite shrines), but it is likely that the tabernacle menorah was a stylized tree of life.
 - (4) The verbs describing Adam's job in Eden, (*l'ôbḏâh ûl'sāmrah*) "to till and keep it," are only used together elsewhere in the Pentateuch "of the Levites' duties in guarding and ministering in the sanctuary" (Num 3.7-8, 8.26, 18.5-6).
 - (5) Adam's "quasi-priestly role" may be evidenced in Gen 3.21 where the "LORD God made tunics of skin for them and clothed them," for "the accounts of the ordination of the priests mention Moses clothing them (Hiphil of *lābaš*) in their tunics (*ketōnet*) (Ex 28.41, 29.8, 40.14; Lev 8.13; cf. also Ex 20.23, 28.42).
 - (6) The geography of the garden in 2.10-14 also has many links with later sanctuary design: the river (Ps 46.5; Ezek 47);¹⁹⁰ the "good gold" of Havilah (Ex 25.11, 17, 24, 29, 36); and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (likened by Wenham to the law [Ps 19.8-9] kept inside the ark in the holy of holies [Ex 25.16; Deut 31.26], a similar threat of death surrounding the ark [2 Sam 6.7, Num 4.20]).¹⁹¹
 - (7) Concern for cultic issues after Gen 3, such as the acceptability of sacrifice in the Cain and Abel story, make it likely that Gen 2-3 should be interpreted in similar fashion. Indeed, according to the rest of the Pentateuch worship is of the greatest importance, so it is not surprising to find such interests reflected in Genesis 2-3.

Additionally, the root of the verb utilized for God's setting Adam in the garden, נָח *nûah* "set to rest," is used in the nominal form to describe the "resting place" of YHWH's Temple (cf. Ps 132.14).¹⁹² These connections, not only within the Genesis narrative but throughout Scripture,

¹⁸⁹ Cf. M. Haran, "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle," pp. 149-174 in *Temples and the Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 164: "The first [principle] is that of the eastern axis. All entrances to the tabernacle face east." The eastward orientation is also emphasized through mention of the four rivers (Gen 2.10-14) that flow out (presumably) in the four cardinal directions so as to fructify the whole earth, yet only the eastward direction (of the Tigris) is mentioned (cf. D. Parry, "Garden of Eden," 132). J. Fesko (*Last Things First*, 66) also mentions the cherubim: "Just as the cherubim with the flaming sword would ostensibly slay anyone who tried to gain access, so too anyone who attempted to enter the holy of holies in the tabernacle or temple would be struck down."

¹⁹⁰ The river, further, is a symbol, both in the ANE and in the Bible, of the life-giving presence of the deity in the temple. Cf. S Tuell, "The Rivers of Paradise," 174, 181-86.

¹⁹¹ Cf. also D.J.A. Clines ("The Tree of Knowledge and the Law of Yahweh (Psalm XIX)," *VT* 24 [1974] 8-14) who argues that Ps 19 presents Torah as a greater source of life than the tree of life; B. Och, "Creation and Redemption," similarly states: "On the climactic seventh day, Moses ascends the mountain to retrieve the Torah which is referred to as the Tree of Life, 'She is a tree of life to them that hold fast to her' (Proverbs 3.18), and corresponds to the original Tree of Life from which Adam and Eve were separated" (38); "In the background to the identification of Wisdom/Torah as a tree stands Proverbs 31.8: 'She [Wisdom] is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her'" (Martha Himmelfarb, "The Temple and the Garden of Eden," 74); "There appears to be a connection, then, between the tree of knowledge as a visible representation of God's law and the psalmist's description of the law of God. The law of God is always present in some form in God's temple, whether the tree of knowledge as a visible representation of God's command, or the presence of the law within the ark" (J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 62).

¹⁹² A.P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 105.

have led other scholars as well to conclude that the garden is the archetypal earthly sanctuary,¹⁹³ the temple itself being a “virtual garden of Eden”¹⁹⁴ and mini cosmos.¹⁹⁵ Parry, affirming that Eden “was seen to be the prototype, pattern, and/or originator of subsequent temples,” persuasively demonstrates that the garden of Eden narrative accords well with each of Lundquist’s nineteen propositions common to ancient Near Eastern temples.¹⁹⁶ Outside of Scripture, the book of *Jubilees* clearly comprehends Eden as the prototype of a tabernacle/temple Holy of holies,¹⁹⁷ 1 *Enoch* 24-27 and *Testament of Levi* 18.6, 10 also closely associating God’s

¹⁹³ J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 58. Among the features of the garden he considers are its eastern location, mountain top locale, river, trees, precious stones, and cherubim (58-67). “The Garden of Eden,” writes Waltke, “is a temple-garden, represented later in the tabernacle” and temple, which was a “virtual garden of Eden” (B.K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 85). “The cumulative effect of the...parallels between the Garden of Gen 2 and Israel’s tabernacle and temple,” Beale concludes, “indicates that Eden was the first archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel’s temples were based” (*Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 79-80). He elaborates on 11 parallels between Eden and Israel’s tabernacle/temples: the garden and temple (1) are the unique place of God’s presence dwelling with his people; (2) both are the place where only priests could dwell; (3) both are the place of guardian cherubim; (4) both have an arboreal symbol in its midst; (5) Eden is formative for garden imagery in Israel’s temple; (6) both are sources of water; (7) both are linked closely to precious stones; (8) garden and temple are located on a mountain; (9) both have an eastern-facing entrance; (10) both have tripartite sacred structures; (11) Adam and Even are placed as divine “images” in the Edenic sanctuary (66-80). Cf. also Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 191; M.G. Kline, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 40.

¹⁹⁴ E. Bloch-Smith, “Solomon’s Temple: The Politics of Ritual Space,” pp 83-94 in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archeology and the Religion of Israel*, B. Gittlen, ed. (Winona Lake: Eisnebrauns, 2002) 88.

¹⁹⁵ C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) 63. He also notes the “belief that the temple is a microcosm of the universe is readily grasped if its three-fold structure, the sanctuary (supremely the Holy of Holies), the inner and outer courts, are allowed to correspond to heaven, earth and sea respectively” (62). Cf. M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and Enthronement,” 506; J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 5-6; J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 78-99; G.K. Beale, “The Final Vision of the Apocalypse,” 191. He further refers to “the ancient notion that the Old Testament Temple was a microcosm of the entire heaven and earth” (193); L.E. Stager, “Jerusalem as Eden,” 36; R.E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965) 65.

¹⁹⁶ D.W. Parry, “The Garden of Eden: Sacred Space, Sanctuary, and Temple of God” (unpublished paper; 1985) 1-36, accessed at: <http://www.bhporter.com/Porter%20PDF%20Files/The%20Garden%20of%20Eden%20sacred%20Space%20Sanctuary%20and%20Temple%20of%20God.pdf>. Cf. also *idem.*, “Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary,” pp 126-51 in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, D.W. Parry, ed. (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994).

¹⁹⁷ G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,” *HTR* 82.2 (1989) 139. With reference to the writings of Ephrem, Anderson writes: “It is the image of Eden as a Temple, a spot of purity, that informs Ephrem’s description of Eden. Not only is Eden modeled on the Temple—a common topos in Jewish and Christian literature—but the very sin of Adam is understood as a violation of the laws of Temple-purity. The tree of knowledge of good and evil is understood as a veil which separates, the outer court from the holy of holies wherein resided the tree of life (*Hymns* 3.3, 5)” (143). Cf. M.G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 35-37; J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 74. He also mentions Martin Luther “long ago wrote that God built Adam ‘a temple that he may worship him’ [Luther, *Genesis*, 95]” (74).

Temple with imagery of the Garden of Eden.¹⁹⁸ Thus, many of the symbolic features of Solomon's temple, for example, were designed to convey to its "visitors that the Temple proper recreated or incorporated the garden of Eden, Yahweh's terrestrial residence,"¹⁹⁹ a notion arguably true for the tabernacle as well. Indeed, we are urging precisely this logic for the Gen 1-3 narratives, namely they serve to explain the necessity and purpose of the cultus.

CONCLUSION

The parallels between the creation/Eden accounts and that of the tabernacle not only portray the tabernacle as a micro-cosmos, but also the cosmos as a macro-tabernacle, with the garden of Eden as an archetypal holy of Holies in Gen 2-3.²⁰⁰ In effect, the earth is God's temple where he can fellowship with humanity.²⁰¹ The seventh day, as we will consider next, is consecrated for the sake of that fellowship, defining the essence of humanity in terms of priesthood or for the

¹⁹⁸ G.K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse," 199: "Judaism in various ways understood the Garden to be the first sanctuary. Perhaps the earliest (160 BC) and clearest expression of this is Jubilees 8.19: "And he [Noah] knew that the Garden is the holy of holies and the dwelling of the LORD, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion the centre of the navel of the earth; these three were created as a holy place facing each other." This is quite interesting because it links the Garden as a Temple with not only that at Sinai, but especially the Temple in Jerusalem. 1 Enoch 24-27 and Testament of Levi 18.6, 10 also closely associate God's Temple with imagery of the Garden of Eden."

¹⁹⁹ E. Bloch-Smith, "'Who is the King of Glory?' Solomon's Temple and Its Symbolism," pp 18-31 in *Scripture and Other Artifacts*, M.D. Coogan, J.C. Exum, L.E. Stager, eds. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 18, 27. Cf. M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 2, 27, 57-103.

²⁰⁰ J.L. Morrow, "Creation and Liturgy," 10. Cf. also J.D. Levenson, who writes: "[T]he Temple was conceived as a microcosm, a miniature world. But it is equally the case that in Israel (and probably also in the other cultures), the world—or, as I should say, ideal or protological world, the world viewed *sub specie creationis*—was conceived, at least in Priestly circles, as a macro-temple, the palace of God in which all are obedient to his commands" (*Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 86); "[T]he Temple is an *eikon*, an image, an epitome of the world. It is not one of many items in the world. It is the world *in nuce*, and the world is the Temple *in extenso*....The world which the Temple incarnates in a tangible way is not the world of history but the world of creation, the world not as it is but as it was meant to be and as it was on the first Sabbath" (*idem.*, "The Temple and the World," *Journal of Religion* 64.3 [Jul 1984] 285, 297). Cf. G.K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse," 208.

²⁰¹ B.K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis 1.1-3, Part V," 32. Waltke compares Isa 40.13-14 with Gen 1 and, agreeing with Whybray's sense of *mišpāt* as building-pattern (vs. "justice"), says the text has to do with "the unusual notion of constructing a building according to a design that fits easily. Isaiah is asking in effect, 'under whom did God serve as an apprentice to learn how to fashion this building, this temple, if you please, namely the cosmos?'...It is concluded, therefore, that the intent of Isaiah's questions is to show that God acted alone in the designing and fashioning of this cosmos, His temple" (31-32). Similarly, J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 151: "In the ancient Near East as in the Bible, temples are for divine 'rest,' and divine rest is found in sanctuaries or sacred space."

sake of worship—thus completing our cosmogonic pattern: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship.

III. FOR WORSHIP: THE LITURGICAL *TELOS* OF CREATION

The pattern being advanced in this thesis (through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship) is, ultimately, a liturgical or cultic pattern, positioning humanity within that paradigm primarily in terms of priesthood, thus prefiguring the tabernacle cultus. Toward clarifying this understanding, we will examine how Gen 1-3 develops the themes of (A) worship as the *telos* of creation, (B) humanity as priesthood, and (C) how the gate liturgy idea naturally follows from the expulsion narrative.

A. *Worship as the Telos of Creation*

Whatever its historical usage in liturgy, Genesis 1 as we will observe declares worship to be the *telos* of creation, and constitutes a *summons* to worship,²⁰² impressing upon its audience that creation is oriented to the Sabbath and thus exists for the sake of worship.²⁰³ Beyond the

²⁰² S.E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 68. He also says the Creation account "is, in sum, a symbolic picture of a world where religion and the priestly cult is preordained by God as the highest purpose of creation" (49). Some take the final form of Genesis 1, perhaps by analogizing the exilic enemies as the threatening waters, as expressing the "conviction that proper worship is essential to the preservation and mission of the community even in exile" (E.C. Brisson, "The Gates of Dawn," 55). S. Paas sees the cosmic symbolism of the Temple as the merging of mythopoeic dimensions with the experiences of present-day reality in Israel's cultus: "Israel recognized this connection and incorporated it into the context of the temple worship in Jerusalem and the Zion tradition affiliated with it" (*Creation and Judgment*, 92). Furthermore, the idea of "serving" the god(s) as the goal of creation is (albeit different from Israel's conception of "worship") common to ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies: "In the ancient Near East, what results from the process is human society organized for the service of the gods. ...Ancient cosmogonies were primarily interested in the emergence of a particular society, organized by means of patron gods and worship systems, a divinely appointed king (or some other kind of leader), and kinship systems. The something new which was not there before is not the mere physical universe but rather the "world" of human beings organized to serve the gods" (R.J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 7-9). This however is not meant in disregard of the vital differences between such "service," for as Clifford notes: "If comparison with other cosmogonies does not prove dependence, it does reveal the emphasis in Genesis. Genesis depicts the first man in royal terms, using the nouns "image" and "likeness" (which are found in Mesopotamian royal inscriptions) and the verbs "rule" and "subdue." In Mesopotamian cosmogonies human beings are invariably slaves created to maintain the universe for the gods, who are idle by vocation" (143).

²⁰³ J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), *In the Beginning...*, 28, 31 (for a fuller quote): "This rhythm [of "seven and its cosmic significance"] is itself at the service of a still deeper meaning: Creation is oriented to the sabbath, which is the sign of the covenant between God and humankind....Creation is designed in such a way that it is oriented to

portrayal of the cosmos as a temple, and the liturgical traits evident in the narrative, this statement finds support from the consistent canonical milieu of creation within the context of Israel's praise.²⁰⁴ However, the outstanding feature of the creation account, setting the whole cosmos within the perspective of worship as its culminating climax, is the seventh day.²⁰⁵

Toward understanding this statement, we turn now to consider (1) the narrative emphasis upon the seventh day, (2) and the *imago Dei* within the context of that emphasis.

1. THE EMPHATIC SEVENTH DAY

Perhaps the most prominent organizational feature of the creation account is its seven days,²⁰⁶ the seventh itself being stressed particularly. Emphasis upon the seventh day is accomplished on a variety of levels in the text. The literary structure, balancing and integrating two triads of days, highlights the unique seventh as climactic.²⁰⁷ Also, while the first six days are mentioned only

worship. It fulfills its purpose and assumes its significance when it is lived, ever new, with a view to worship. Creation exists for the sake of worship. As Saint Benedict said in his Rule: *Operi Dei nihil praeponatur* – “Nothing must be put before the service of God.” This is not the expression of an otherworldly piety but a clear and sober translation of the creation account and of the message that it bears for our lives. The true center, the power that moves and shapes from within in the rhythm of the stars and of our lives, is worship. Our life's rhythm moves in proper measure when it is caught up in this. Ultimately every people has known this. The creation accounts of all civilizations point to the fact that the universe exists for worship and for the glorification of God....To celebrate the sabbath means to celebrate the covenant.” Cf. also A.P. Ross, *Genesis* (CBC; Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2008) 41.

²⁰⁴ C. Westermann (*The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 4-5) thus notes: “the whole wealth of biblical statements concerning Creator and creation stand in conjunction with the praise of God....the great majority of passages concerning Creator and creation in the Old Testament are intimately associated with God's praise... When the biblical writers speak about Creator and creation, they break forth in praise of God's majesty, in a joyous, sincere, and spontaneous praise of his glory. ...the real purpose is appreciated only when one considers that the original hearers of the creation account heard it as part of Israel's total praise of God as Creator, which, for them, had its proper setting in the liturgical psalms.”

²⁰⁵ R.J. Clifford's statement expresses well the scholarly consensus: “The seventh day, the day of God's resting, is the climax of the narrative” (“The Hebrew Scriptures and the Theology of Creation,” 522). G.J. Wenham writes that the sixth day's work “is not [the account's] conclusion. The only connection the seventh day has with the preceding days is sequence. Its character and formulae set it apart from the preceding six days. It is pre-eminently the day God ceased his creative work: of all the days the seventh is the only one blessed and sanctified. Its different literary form sets it apart in the narrative, just as the divine rest and sanctification set it apart in fact” (*Genesis 1-15*, 37). Cf. W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17.”

²⁰⁶ Cf. M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 87.

²⁰⁷ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 65. N. Sarna affirms that the “ascending order of Creation, and the ‘six-plus-one’ literary pattern that determines the presentation of the narrative, dictates that the seventh day be the momentous climax” (*Genesis*, 14).

once, the seventh is mentioned emphatically, three times in three consecutive sentences.²⁰⁸ The seventh day is also syntactically emphasized: “The disjunction serves thus to highlight 2.2-3 as a conclusion of the scheme, not as another in the successive stages within the scheme. Hence the seventh day is categorically (formally) different from the other six days.”²⁰⁹ This syntactical separation is, in fact, a case of form following function, separating the seventh day literarily even as God within the narrative separates or “sanctifies” (שִׁקְדָה) it. As a distinct sub-unit, Gen 2.2-3 may be outlined as a chiasm, centered upon God’s blessing and sanctifying the seventh day.²¹⁰ By this consecration, God created a palace in time, forming a temporal space and filling it with holiness so that here, at the culmination of creation, “forming and filling kiss each other.”²¹¹ Further, that the “description of the seventh day forms an *inclusio* around everything in Genesis 1,” may be justly interpreted as the seventh day’s being the fulfillment, purpose, and end of everything in Genesis 1—that is, “the goal of the whole creative process.”²¹² Given the temple imagery in the account, along with the later cultic appropriation of the Sabbath, it is likely that the supreme significance of the seventh day is found in God’s indwelling of the cosmos upon it,

²⁰⁸ Cf. J. Moskala, “The Sabbath in the Creation Account,” 57-8.

²⁰⁹ G.W. Coats, *Genesis*, 43.

²¹⁰ See, e.g., K.A. Strand, “The Sabbath,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, R. Dederen, et al, eds. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2000) 495.

²¹¹ J. Moskala, “The Sabbath in the First Creation Account,” 56.

²¹² D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 66. H. Blocher (*In the Beginning*, 57-58) similarly notes: “The use of the anthropomorphic figure of the week for the logic of creation and of its completion allowed the author to outline a theology of the sabbath. That was the theme closest to his heart. The narrative has two peaks, mankind and the sabbath. This would be better expressed by saying that the creation of mankind crowns the work, but the sabbath is its supreme goal...It refers him back to his most essential relationship, that with God. That is the message of the sabbath.” Similarly, E. Greenstein (“Presenting Genesis 1,” 4) shows how every aspect of the account has the Sabbath in view: “Genesis 1 sets forth both implicitly and explicitly the rationale on which the Torah’s religion will be founded, or by which the Torah’s religion will make sense. The narrative is structured by the recurrent formula, ‘There was sunset, there was daybreak, one day,’ ‘second day,’ ‘third day,’ etc., into seven sections, seven days....The significance of time is made explicit in the narrative with the creation of the luminaries... ‘to be signs of sacred occasions (*mo’adim*), days, and years’ (v 14). Days need to be counted for the sake of sacred time. The climax of the creation narrative is not, as some have said, the creation of humanity, but rather the establishment, setting apart, and blessing of the day that has been anticipated by the division of the story into days, the day that retrospectively gives significance to the counting of days, the day that will always be different, God’s day, the seventh day, the Sabbath.”

that is, in the ritual²¹³ experience of the divine Presence within creation.²¹⁴ Some have hereby drawn an analogy between the seventh day rest of God and the bringing into a temple of an image of the deity during the process of temple dedication in the ancient Near East.²¹⁵ On the seventh day there is something of a bond, or union, between Creator and creation, as God enters his world, the king enthroned in his temple, vivifying and sanctifying it with his Presence—the

²¹³ I say “ritual” for the sake of being open to the possibility that God’s indwelling on the Sabbath may not have been intended as “once for all,” but as establishing a sabbatical pattern of worship, i.e., He would have met in an especially immanent way with humanity every Sabbath. This would seem to follow from the separation of the seventh day as sacred time, even though the other six days were declared “good.” The following narrative of the Fall (Gen 3), in any case, does not intimate God’s “Sabbath” Presence. Furthermore, the “poem and the praise sung by Creation (including the heavenly retinue) to the Creator,” specifically as Sabbath liturgy, celebrates the YHWH’s “enthronement upon the completion of His work....Like the Sabbath itself, so also the text [of Gen 1.1-2.3]...is transformed into a cultic-religious experience which recurs every seventh day and comes to commemorate the act of Creation and the enthronement of God” (M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement,” 509, 512). This statement Weinfeld makes in light of Ps 93’s usage as Sabbath liturgy, according to Rabbinical sources as well as the LXX’s title to the psalm, “For the eve of the Sabbath.” He further states: “In the liturgy of the Sabbath eve the enthronement Psalms 95-99, 29, 92 and 93 are included. The origin of this custom is unknown” (511). S. Paas writes: “It must be stressed how clearly the divine kingship, descriptions of YHWH’s palace and His holy mountain in the thought of Israel were related to the faith in His creation power...As King, YHWH is the Builder of heaven and earth; as King, He is also the one who from out of His palace on Zion provides Israel with all goodness and restrains the powers of chaos. In this way, in creation Israel recognized her King and in the mighty Warrior saw her Creator” (*Creation and Judgment*, 97). Cf. M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 208-12; 283-86. Similarly, the LORD’s Day celebrates the decisive act of the new creation, i.e., the resurrection of Christ, and Christ’s consequent enthronement (cf. Acts 2).

²¹⁴ G. von Rad (*Genesis*, 61-2) considers 2.1-3 “one of the most remarkable and daring testimonies” of the Creation account, establishing God’s Sabbath rest, not merely as a negative sign marking the end of creating, but positively as a “new thing”—a new creation, as it were, “above and beyond” the other acts so as to become “a third something that exists between God and the world.” This interpretation, incidentally, lends itself to the Hebrew text’s designation of God’s “completion” being on the seventh day (versus the LXX’s “sixth day”).

²¹⁵ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 148, 151-52: “This seventh day is not a theological appendix to the creation account, just to bring closure now that the main event of creating people has been reported. It intimates the purpose of creation and of the cosmos. God not only sets up the cosmos so that people will have a place; he also sets up the cosmos to serve as his temple...In a temple-construction project [in the ancient Near East], the structure was built, and the furniture and trappings were made in preparation for the moment when all was ready for the dedication of the temple. On this occasion, normally a seven-day celebration, the functions of the temple were declared, the furniture and hangings were put in place, the priests were installed, and the appropriate sacrifices were made to initiate the temple’s operation. Somewhere in the process, the image of the deity was brought into the temple to take up residence (rest). The Sabbath element helps us to recognize the temple-cosmos equation and to realize the contextual significance of the functions and functionaries in the creation narrative.” See also S.D. McBride Jr., “Divine Protocol,” 11-12, 14: “What takes material shape in response to God’s speaking is a palatial abode—fashioned over the course of six days and completed on a seventh. While the edifice teemed with created life, its architecture is inhabitable on a more sublime scale. Cosmos as epitomized in the protocol of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is suited for the creator’s own residence....This [seventh] day of silent divine rest is a consummation of all that has gone before because it inaugurates God’s residence within the cosmic temple.”

Sabbath being, ultimately, about the Presence of God.²¹⁶ Read from the perspective of time, the creation account itself may be viewed as an approach to the divine Presence: day one's evening and morning → day four's annual cultic festivals → day seven's "rest."²¹⁷ The account's catechesis seems clear: the abundant life is found in engagement with the divine. Worship, to conclude the point, is the *telos* of Creation: "Last in creation, first in intention," the Sabbath is "the end of the creation of heaven and earth."²¹⁸

2. THE *IMAGO DEI* AND *IMITATIO DEI*

In light of the seventh day's climactic position in creation, the crown of creation (Man), then, must not be confused with the goal and purpose, the *telos*, of creation (Sabbath union with God)—the link between the *why* of Sabbath union with God and the *what* of Man being the *imago Dei*.²¹⁹ The seventh day blessing comes, in other words, as a fruition of the radical words, "And God said *to them*" (1.28).²²⁰ In this sense, once more, man is not the culmination of

²¹⁶ Similarly, R.M. Davidson writes: "The Sabbath is holy because God fills it with His presence; therefore, the Sabbath is not just a day, but a Person!" (*A Love Song for the Sabbath: How to Experience the Joy that God Intended When He Gave Us the Sabbath* [Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1988] 29). That presence is symbolized in Gen 2-3 by the river (cf. Ezek 47.1-12) and Tree of life, so that expulsion from God's presence necessarily means expulsion from the Garden (see S. Tuell's "The Rivers of Paradise"). Sabbath worship, via Israel's Tabernacle/Temple cultus, provided re-entry into God's Sabbath presence. Further, by sanctifying Sunday, the "Lord's Day," with his presence, then, Jesus Christ affirms it as the new creation Sabbath (cf. John 20.1, 19, 26).

²¹⁷ Cf. P. Weimar, "Struktur und Komposition der priesterschriftlichen Schöpfungserzählung (Gen 1,1—2,4a)," pp 803-43 in *Ex Mesopotamia et Syria Lux: Festschrift für Manfred Dietrich zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (AOAT 281; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002) 836: First Day: Zeit → (Second/Third Days: Schöpfungswelt) → Fourth Day: Zeit → (Fifth/Sixth Days: Lebewesen) → Seventh Day: Zeit.

²¹⁸ A. Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951) 14.

²¹⁹ Failing to note this connection, J. Atwell ("An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1," *JTS* 51.2 [2000] 476) writes: "The final stage of the tradition as we have it in Genesis 1.1-2.4a is different. The sabbath has been interposed. As a result the fashioning of human beings "in the image of God" is still very significant, but no longer the goal of the narrative. The thrust of the narrative now leads on through the days of creation to the rest of God on the seventh day. That is now the climax of the story. The effect of the sabbath has been to restore a God-centeredness to the account of the creation of the cosmos." If, however, "image of God" is seen with the Sabbath as its point and end, then no tension remains.

²²⁰ B. Och, "Creation and Redemption," 228: "The *imago Dei* describes the uniqueness of human existence by virtue of which the individual can enter into a relationship with God. The human being is regarded as God's counterpart on earth, the "You" who is addressed by God, and the "I" who is responsible to God. This Divine/human affinity, not only determines the meaning of human existence, but also drastically alters God's relationship to the world. The creator God who has, heretofore, radically separated Himself from His creation now opens up the possibility of entering the world through His involvement with humanity. A Divine/human dynamic is set in motion

creation, but rather seventh-day-worshiping-man. Westermann, who considers Gen 2.1-3 “the final chord in the song of creation,”²²¹ captures well this distinction:

The statement [“the image of God”] really means that God has made man to communicate with him, so that man might speak to God and he might hear God’s word. This, then, shows us the goal of creation. God made man after his image so that the stream of life might flow in the encounter between God and man, in that which transpires between God and man, through which, even though we cannot fully understand it, God works toward the goal of all creation. ...This description of man means...that man can maintain his humanity only in the presence of God. Man separated from God has not only lost God, but also the purpose of his humanity. ...It is all the more significant, then, that Genesis 1 does not really close with the creation of man; rather, in 2.1-3, definitely a P section, something is introduced which actually does not belong to the work of creation, but which is given even stronger emphasis by being presented as the conclusion: man is *not* the goal of God’s creation. From the very beginning the seven-day framework has been progressing toward the seventh day. The goal is really the solemn rest of that day. In the blessing and hallowing of the seventh day, we may detect the still veiled goal, the day of worship on which the responding congregation audibly utters the praise of the Creator which at creation was still implicit in God’s own contemplation of his work.²²²

That the creation of man has particular reference to the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day (2.1-3) also seems a legitimate inference given the poetic nature shared by both man’s creation and the sanctification of the seventh day, inviting their association. Regarding the creation of man in v 27, Cassuto, for example, remarks that the text

assumes a more exalted tone and becomes poetic. The verse consists of three lines, each of which has four stresses and contains the verb בָּרָא *bārā’* [‘create’], the repetition being for emphasis. The first line speaks, in general terms, of man’s *creation*; the second draws attention to the fact that he was created in the *Divine image*; the third notes the creation of *two sexes*. The poetic structure of the sentence, its stately diction and its

which not only enables the Transcendent God to enter the time-space constructs of worldly existence but also provides humanity with the means to transcend the finite and limited structure of creaturely existence.” See also, *idem.*, “The Garden of Eden,” 146: With the creation of man, God has someone to whom He can speak. What has, heretofore, been a Divine monologue will, henceforth, become a Divine-human dialogue. The proper function of each created object has been assigned to it by God as a fixed and unchanging part of its essential nature. The essence of man, however, does not reside within man, but is to be found in his relationship to God, namely, that of listening and responding. This Divine-human relationship not only determines the meaning of human existence, but, also, drastically alters God’s relationship to the world. The Creator God who has, heretofore, radically separated Himself from the created world, now opens up the possibility of entering the world through His relationship with man. A Divine-human dynamic has been set in motion which enables the transcendent God to enter the time-space constructs of worldly existence and provides man with the means to transcend the finite and limited structure of creaturely existence. This is the uniqueness of man.” R.J. Clifford similarly states that “only the human race, by virtue of...its freedom to respond to the divine word, directly encounters God” (*Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible*, 144).

²²¹ C. Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 24.

²²² *Ibid.*, 21-22 (emphasis original). H. Blocher similarly states: “What is the basis of the subordination of work to this “chief end” of mankind, “to glorify God and to enjoy him forever” (The Shorter Catechism)? It is nothing other than his creation in the image of God. But what is also meant by the presentation of the divine work at the beginning as a workman’s week, as an archetype of the human week, except that mankind is to live according to the image of his Creator? So we see linking together the meaning of the Sabbath and the theme of the image of God, which are in a manner interdependent...” (*In the Beginning*, 57-58).

particular emotional quality attest the special importance that the Torah attributes to the making of man—the noblest of creatures.²²³

Furthermore, the three lines are each composed with four words, 12 (4x3) perhaps not being an insignificant number given the analogy between the man in the land (עֵדֶן) of Eden and Israel's 12 tribes in "the land" of promise (the new Eden). But the progression is also noteworthy: (1) man's creation → (2) in the Divine image → (3) as two sexes. That those created in God's image are two sexes, male and female, rounds the poetry off with an open-ended assumption, i.e., fecundity, life—the image of God propagated throughout the earth (and this is made explicit in the divine benediction of the next verse, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..."). To the point, however, the poetic heights of man's creation is matched alone by "the beauty and majesty" of the seventh day's sanctification (2.2-3), which "consists of three consecutive, parallel lines, each of which contains *seven* words and is divided into two parts, the first part ending in every case, like a threefold refrain, with the words—the *seventh day*."²²⁴ In both sections, the creation of man and the sanctification of the seventh day, the poetry of the first two lines are somewhat synonymous repetitions while the third brings in a new element ("male and female" on the one hand, "blessed...and sanctified" on the other). Furthermore, the blessing of the seventh day constitutes

the third time that an expression of blessing occurs in our section. As previously stated, threefold repetition indicates emphasis....The repeated blessings, it may be noted, are in a kind of ascending order: the fish are blessed with physical fertility; on man a twofold blessing is bestowed, comprising both physical fecundity and spiritual elevation; the benison of the Sabbath is wholly one of spiritual exaltation, a blessing imbued with sanctity...elevation and exaltation above the usual level; the seventh day was lifted up above the plane of other days.²²⁵

Firmage also roots the Priestly agenda of Gen 1 in the *imago Dei* which provides the possibility of holiness (likeness to God) through the worship of God on the seventh day, the "sanctuary in

²²³ U. Cassuto, *Genesis* I, 57 (emphasis original).

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 61 (emphasis original). NOTE: "His work" (עֲשֵׂתוֹ) and "which He did" (אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) also occur three times each.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

time” that is also “the beachhead of holiness in the world.”²²⁶ Thus man, imbued with a “spiritual elevation” that distinguishes his blessedness from that of the other living creatures, must be designed for the “spiritual exaltation” of the Sabbath, which, as expounded later in the Pentateuch, involves the noble concept of *imitatio Dei* (Ex 20.8-11). As Greenstein has written:

The observance of the creation cycle week by week is accordingly a ritual of *imitatio Dei*, “imitation of God,” and it goes far in illustrating the major principle in the Torah’s religion: “You are to be holy/sacred/set apart because I the Lord your God am holy/sacred/set apart” (Lev 19.2)...The principle of separation as a characteristically divine behavior is, of course, established in the Genesis 1 creation story, where the verb *lehavdil*, “to separate,” describes a number of creative acts....²²⁷

To observe the Sabbath, then, is to participate in the creation event it symbolizes—that is, to re-experience, or enter into, the primal event of God’s hallowing and blessing that causes and effects the basis for the divine-human relationship.²²⁸ The *imitatio Dei* of the Sabbath—the Sabbath “which, to the Torah, is as much a part of the cosmic order as is the foregoing creativity”²²⁹—is found, therefore, to be of a piece with the *imago Dei*,²³⁰ at the core of humanity’s being and purpose as *homo liturgicus*:²³¹ “On this day man must recognize the

²²⁶ E. Firmage, “Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda,” *JSOT* 82 (1999) 97-114 (110).

²²⁷ E. Greenstein, “Presenting Genesis 1,” 5.

²²⁸ G.W. Coats, “Strife and Broken Intimacy,” 156.

²²⁹ N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 2. He further states: “The seventh day is what it is, because God chose to ‘bless it and declared it holy.’ Its blessed and sacred character is part of the divinely ordained cosmic order” (21).

²³⁰ Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*: “Israel’s obligation to hallow the Sabbath day is another instance of this Priestly theology of *imitatio Dei*. We see, then, that Genesis 1.1-2.3, the priestly cosmogony, presents creation as an event ordered toward the rest of God, with which it closes, a rest that signifies an act of redemption and social reform and an opportunity for human participation in the sublime quietude of the unopposed creator God...[T]he Sabbath has assumed the cosmogonic role that the New Year held in some other ancient Near Eastern cultures...” (119); E.J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One*: “The ‘rest’ of God, argues Ridderbos correctly, is to be regarded as creation’s climax, and this rest was expressed by mentioning the seventh day...[Man’s] work, like that of God, is to have the glory of God as its goal” (77).

²³¹ The phrase “*homo liturgicus*” is used by J.L. Morrow (“Creation and Liturgy,” 10) who borrowed it from Scott W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 106. Hahn, further, suggests (yet without offering much by way of support) that Adam’s disobedience might be seen as a failure of worship, an abdication of his priestly service in the temple of creation (120).

enthroned Lord of hosts who, having completed his work, awaits in the attitude of majestic repose, the liturgical response of his creature.”²³²

Panning back to view the larger picture as this section concludes, we contend the final canonical form of Gen 1-3 presents creation as the construction of a divine temple, with Eden as an archetypal holy of holies, and the human vocation identified as liturgical worship.²³³ Our focus continues now to fill out the worship aspect of this picture, particularly considering how humanity is presented in priestly terms, a point that will further undergird our reading of the expulsion narrative within the context of the gate liturgy.

B. Humanity as Priesthood/ Adam as Homo Liturgicus

1. THE CULTIC TRANSITION FROM GEN 1 TO 2-3

Through the cultic lens of cosmic mountain ideology, the pathway from the opening chapter of Genesis to the second and third is significantly opened—so we hope to demonstrate here. To begin, there is a sense where, given the *imago Dei*, the prospect of the Sabbath in Genesis 1—namely encountering the divine Presence as rehearsed above—almost requires the garden of

²³² E.H. Maly, “Israel—God’s Liturgical People” pp 10-20 in *Liturgy for the People: Essays in Honor of Gerhard Ellard, S.J., 1894-1963* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1963) 14. In his *The Spirit of Liturgy*, J. Saward, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), J. Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI) writes that creation is the space for worship, and worship, being the soul of the covenant between God and man, is meant to draw the whole of reality into communion with God (26-27).

²³³ J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 14. Indeed, the Torah itself presents worship as the goal of creation and, as such, this goal may be extended through the Christian canon as well. Cf. S.E. Balentine, *The Torah’s Vision of Worship*, 66. So, too, G.F. Hasel: “The conclusion of the Genesis creation story indicates that just as man is the crown of Creation, so the seventh day, the Sabbath, is the final goal of Creation” (“The Sabbath in the Pentateuch,” in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, K.A. Strand, ed. [Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1982] 23). R.M. Davidson, e.g., interprets the centrality of the temple in Scripture as the overarching centrality of worship, the issue at the core of cosmic conflict in the scriptural meta-narrative: “The heavenly Sanctuary, on the holy mountain, was the location of the throne of God, and here the unfallen universe came to worship the Most High God. ...Lucifer’s pride led him to rebel against the obedient, humble worship of God and to aspire to equality with God, to receive worship and adoration himself instead of God [Ezek 28.16]. Rebellion against God and rivalry with God. The Great War had begun! The issue was worship, and a Cosmic War dealing with worship had as its natural battlefield the *place* of worship—the celestial Sanctuary. ...The issue is worship” (“Cosmic Metanarrative,” 107-08).

Eden narrative in Genesis 2.²³⁴ Read from the perspective of time, as previously noted, the creation account itself may be viewed as an approach to the divine Presence: day one's evening and morning → day four's annual cultic festivals → day seven's "rest." Moreover, the seventh day, as Balentine provocatively suggests, may also be fundamental to the transition of work, from God's in Gen 1 to that of humanity in Gen 2-3:

But for all its hallowed distinctiveness, the seventh day is as much the liturgical beginning-point of creation as it is its culmination. The seventh/sabbath day is, as previously noted, the bridge between what has been and what is to be. It stands at the intersection between heaven and earth (Genesis 1.1-31) and what will subsequently happen on earth (Genesis 2.4b-25). It hinges the two creational demands of God: humankind's stewardship of the earth's resources in royal terms (Gen 1.28) and the summons to be servants (Gen 2.15). It marks the point where God rests from the divine activity of naming and relinquishes the responsibility for earthly naming to humankind....Genesis 2.3 suggests that when, on the seventh/sabbath day, God rests from a divine creating that is also a making, it is not in order to retire from the world, but rather to wait expectantly—with "the heavens and the earth...and all their multitude"—for the subsequent acts of human making that will bring about new and future creations. This sabbatical symmetry between God's creation and humankind's recreation is captured nicely in a Jewish interpretation of the text. N.H. Sarna notes that Ibn Ezra and Radak understood the verb *'āśah* in Genesis 2.3 to mean that God rested from all the work that God created in order "[for man] to [continue to] do [thenceforth]."²³⁵

While the burden of the following section will be to define that work of humanity in priestly terms, here we simply desire to show how the cultic layer of both accounts facilitates the transition between them, and itself serves to portray Adam as a priest. Considering, in other words, the garden as something of the inner sanctum of the cosmic temple, and its priest the man with the woman to help him,²³⁶ the transition from Gen 1 to 2-3 might possibly be rendered as the movement from creating the cosmic tabernacle to establishing the priestly service of humanity—that is, from the *telos* of creation as worship to the nature of man as *homo liturgicus*. This is, again, merely to add the cultic context to the acknowledged relationship between the two

²³⁴ Cf. B. Och, "The Garden of Eden," 147. For synthesizing parallels between Gen 1 and 2-3 in relation to the *imago Dei*, cf. J.F.A. Sawyer, "The Image of God, the Wisdom of Serpents and the Knowledge of Good and Evil," pp 64-73 in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden*, P. Morris, D. Sawyer, eds. (JSOTSup 136; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992).

²³⁵ S.E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 93-94. The Sabbath, then, is fundamental to the concept of the *imago Dei*, out of which flows *imitatio Dei*. Cf. J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," 292, 293: "The Sabbath provides access to the sanctuary....[T]he Sabbath routinizes the experience of divine enthronement at creation."

²³⁶ B.K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 81.

accounts whereby Gen 1 describes the construction of the heavens and the earth, before the narrative of Gen 2-3 describes the events of which the earth will be the theatre, the inversion from “the heavens and the earth” to “the earth and the heavens” in 2.4 symbolizing this change of perspective.²³⁷ “The depiction of the garden as a primeval tabernacle of God, followed by the description of God’s placing of humanity in the garden,” furthermore, “bears a strong resemblance to the later establishment of the priesthood in the tabernacle (and the temple).”²³⁸ Adding the contextual cultic layer to the transition, in other words, renders the movement from tabernacle to priesthood as seen in the transition from the latter half of Exodus to the first half of Leviticus. Genesis 1, thus construed, begins with the Spirit of God (1.2), requisite to tabernacle building (Ex 31.2-3), and ends with the blessing and sanctification (1.31-2.3) fundamental to tabernacle completion and consecration (Ex 39.43-40.9); and Genesis 2-3 follows thematically with the first Man invested with priestly duties amidst a garden richly laden with tabernacle symbolism.²³⁹ Nevertheless, even when considering Gen 1 alone, J.H. Walton, in light of the ANE cosmological context (whereby the cosmos is a temple), yet discerns humanity’s priestly role:

We would conclude then that Genesis 1 is composed along the lines of a temple dedication ceremony in which over a seven-day period, the functions of the cosmic temple are initiated and the functionaries installed. The functions center on the royal and priestly roles of people, but the imagery is defined by the presence of God who has taken up his rest in the center of the cosmic temple.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ H. Blocher, *In the Beginning*, 31. A.J. Hoerth (*Archeology & The Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998] 187) similarly states: “Genesis 1 presents a summary of creation. The second chapter focuses on the first couple for whom God prepared Eden, a garden.”

²³⁸ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 77.

²³⁹ This idea is apparently missed by some, such as Niditch, who seem to move from Gen 1 to 3 without acknowledging the presence or significance of the prelapsarian status of humanity: “Two major thematic chains emerge in Genesis 1-11 which describe two key transformations in the Israelite concept of the becoming of the universe. One involves the passage from an initial state of chaos to an ideal cosmos in which all of nature is beautifully arranged and ordered. The other involves the passage from this ideal state to reality, for the first movement from chaos to cosmos stops short of creating those social structures, hierarchies, and definitions which mark real time and the human being’s everyday status in the world.” (*Chaos to Cosmos*, 6).

²⁴⁰ J.H. Walton, “Creation in Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the Ancient Near East,” 61.

But with the depiction of humanity's work in Gen 2-3, and to which we now turn, that priestly role is all the more manifest.

2. TO "WORSHIP" AND "OBEY"

Within the overall context of viewing creation as a macro-temple in Genesis 1 and Eden as its holy of holies in Genesis 2-3, the priestly nature of humanity becomes apparent.²⁴¹ That the garden narrative indeed portrays Adam as an archetypal priest ministering before YHWH is supported also by use of the verbs defining the divine intent, to "work/serve" (עָבַד *'ābad*) and to "protect/guard" (שָׁמַר *šāmar*) being used together again within the Pentateuch only to describe the duties of the Levites.²⁴² Along the same lines, J.H. Sailhamer writes that

a more suitable and grammatically sound translation of the Hebrew [2.15] לְעֹבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ is "to worship and obey" (Cassuto, 122-23). That is, the man is put in the garden to worship God and to obey him. Man's life in the garden is to be characterized by worship and obedience; he is a priest, not a keeper of the garden. Such a reading not only answers the objections raised against the traditional English translation, it also suits the larger ideas of the narrative. Throughout ch. 2 the author has consistently and consciously developed the idea of man's "likeness" to God along the same lines as the major themes of the Pentateuch as a whole, namely, the themes of worship and Sabbath rest. Humankind can enjoy fellowship with God, rest, and worship because they bear God's own likeness. A further confirmation of understanding לְעֹבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ as "to worship and obey" is that in v 16 we read for the first time that "God commanded" (וַיֹּאמֶר) the man whom he had created. As in the rest of the Torah, enjoyment of God's good land is contingent on "keeping" (לִשְׁמֹר) God's commandments (*mišwōt*; cf. Deut 30.16).²⁴³

²⁴¹ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 173, 182. Although D.C. Timmer (*Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*) takes a more conservative approach, he nonetheless concludes: "the Garden was indeed a type of sacred space, and...as a result humanity's vocation there did have a limited priestly aspect" (86), his reasons for limitation are not altogether clear. Cf. S.E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 49. Cf. also J.H. Walton, "Eden, Garden of," *DOTP* 205-06.

²⁴² G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism," 401; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, J. McHugh, trans. (1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 348; G.K. Beale, *Temple and the Church's Mission*, 68. This seems to be a common early interpretation as the fourth century document Ephraim's *Hymns on Paradise* demonstrates: "Because Adam was a priest, king and prophet, God made him enter Paradise that he might serve as a priest in Eden, the holy church. Accordingly, Blessed Moses gave this witness about him: '...that he might serve God by priestly service in praise and guard that commandment which was entrusted to him by the forethought of God'" (quoted in G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 206). This distinction between chapters 1 (tabernacle) and 2-3 (priesthood) may possibly inform the contextually consistent use of *ʾlōhîm* in Gen 1 versus *yhwh ʾlōhîm* in Gen 2-3. Cf. also Cassuto, *Genesis I*, 84-88; B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 51, 59. At the least one might posit that the "combination of it [Jehovah] with the word 'God,' found here [Gen 2] and in the following chapter, shows the purpose of the writer or editor to convey the idea that the Creator of the world and the God of Israel were one and the same," (W.H. Harper, "The Origin of Man and His First State of Innocence," 97).

²⁴³ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 79. Cf. Noel Due, *Created for Worship* (Geanies House: Focus, 2005) 41-42. In these pages, Due offers a popular-level summary of the garden of Eden as temple.

This understanding of the priestly role of Adam also conforms to—and, perhaps more importantly, completes—the general Priestly categories of sacred space (creation/sanctuary), time (Sabbath), and status (priesthood).²⁴⁴ Further, there is the parallel, already noted, between Adam’s post-fall vestments and the investiture of the Levitical priests, both needing their nakedness covered (Gen 3.7, 21; Ex 20.26, 28.42) and utilizing the noun כְּהֹנֵן and the *hiphil* form of the verb שָׁבַע:²⁴⁵

Gen 3.21: YHWH God made for Adam and for his wife tunics (כְּהֹנֵן) of skins and clothed them (וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם).
 Lev 8.13: And Moses brought Aaron’s sons and clothed them (וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם) with tunics (כְּהֹנֵן).

Likely then, Adam was placed in the garden to fulfill his priestly office.²⁴⁶

This more cultic perspective, moreover, was the standard rabbinical interpretation of Gen 2.7:²⁴⁷ the Aramaic translation of which (*Tg. Neofiti*) expressly states Adam’s being placed in the Garden “to toil in the Law and to observe its commandments” with v 19 noting that Adam’s naming of the animals utilized “the language of the sanctuary”; *Tg. Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis* states Adam’s creation included “dust from the site of the sanctuary”; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer* 11 and 12 and *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* 14.8 suggest Adam was created “at the site of the later temple, which was also at Eden” or close to it. There has been, in fact, a continuous tradition with respect to Adam as priest and sacrificer, from *Jubilees* (second century B.C.) to the Rabbinic period,²⁴⁸ Adam sometimes portrayed specifically as a high priest.²⁴⁹ Consistent, then, with

²⁴⁴ F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 44-45.

²⁴⁵ Cf. G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism”; J. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 72-73: “[O]ne should not miss the parallels between the dressing of man in Eden and the subsequent investiture of the temple priests.” This connection was acknowledged by Rabbinic interpreters (*Mid. Rabb.* Num 4.8). Cf. also F.H. Gorman, “Priestly Rituals of Founding: Time, Space, and Status,” pp 47-64 in *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honor of John H. Hayes* (JSOTSS 173; Sheffield 1993).

²⁴⁶ M.G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 54. Cf. W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 61.

²⁴⁷ G.K. Beale, *Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 67.

²⁴⁸ C.T.R. Hayward, “The Figure of Adam in Psuedo-Philo’s Biblical Antiquities,” *JSJ* 23 (1992) 1-20.

²⁴⁹ J. Marcus, “The Son of Man as Son of Adam, Part II: Exegesis,” *RB* (2003) 374. See Marcus’s fn 14 on the same page for the various early sources describing Adam as priest, high priest, and/or performing sacrifices.

creation's being a cosmic temple and with the garden being a holy of holies, Adam is portrayed as an archetypal priest—not a farmer.²⁵⁰ How this priestly status enlightens our understanding of the expulsion in Gen 3 we will now examine.

C. The Gate Liturgy: Humanity's Profound Descent

Synthesizing the chapter's labors thus far, we may note "Eden is thought to be a cosmic mountain upon which Adam serves as priest."²⁵¹ The significance of Adam's presence atop the mountain will be positioned now within the gate liturgy—that is, Adam is the righteous one able to ascend the mount of YHWH, able to worship in the beauty of holiness.²⁵² This understanding, however, is qualified in a negative manner in the narrative: by Adam's expulsion (descent) upon disobedience, as that righteousness is lost.²⁵³ Central to the account of Gen 2-3 is the loss of humanity's approach to the Creator, a (priestly)²⁵⁴ loss entailing barred access to life in

²⁵⁰ J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 71, 75. However, given that the cosmos is a temple, tilling the earth/farming would in itself constitute priestly labor.

²⁵¹ G.A. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation?" 147.

²⁵² This is in accord with seeing that Adam, in "line with the ancient Near East, in which images of the god were in a garden-like Temple, ...is presumably that 'image' in Genesis 2" (G.K. Beale, "The Final Vision of the Apocalypse," 201). Fletcher-Louis ("God's Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest") notes: "With a number of recent commentators we must now take seriously the fact that 'image' language is cult statue or idol language. This is how the word *šelem* is normally used in the Old Testament (e.g. Num 33.52; 1 Sam 6.5; 6.11; 2 Kgs 11.18) and in the cognate Akkadian phrase *šalam ili/ilani*. Given that (i) other parts of Genesis 1 are a polemic against the polytheism of pagan cosmogonies and (ii) the Genesis 1 account of creation has its *Sitz im Leben* in the priestly view of the cult and its liturgy, to use language otherwise reserved for idols for the creation of humanity is either dangerously obtuse or deliberately subversive" (83). For the role of Genesis 1 in relation to the priestly holiness code, cf. E. Firmage, "Genesis 1 and the Priestly Agenda," 97-114.

²⁵³ Several recent outlines of Gen 2-3 expose the narrative emphasis upon "fall" and expulsion. J.T. Walsh, e.g., divides Gen 2.4b-3.24 into seven scenes according to "shifts in *dramatis personae* and changes in literary form," producing a concentric outline highlighting the Fall ("Genesis 2.4b-3.24: A Synchronic Approach," pp. 362-82 in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood*, originally published in *JBL* 96.2 [1977] 166-77). Cf. also H. Blocher, *In the Beginning*, 27-30; R. Ouro, "The Garden of Eden Account," has a similar concentric outline (224), using many lexical and thematic parallels for justification (229-43); D. Patte and J.F. Parker, "A Structural Exegesis of Genesis 2 and 3," 55-75.

²⁵⁴ For a reading of Adam as first high priest, and the relation of the Eden narrative to the priesthood, see M. Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004) 4.

abundance—life, that is, in the archetypal holy of holies.²⁵⁵ Indeed, by a canonical reading, Adam’s expulsion from the summit of God’s mount may be seen as the very event that initiates and makes necessary the gate liturgy: having been exiled by YHWH Elohim, who now dares enter—*who*, the psalmist asks (Pss 15, 24), shall ascend? We turn now to offer a reading of this central tragic event driving the plot of biblical history, humanity’s exile from the divine Presence, in light of the gate liturgy ritual. In a sense, and as discussed in the previous chapter, the expulsion narrative is a “gate liturgy in reverse,” paralleled by Gen 11.1-9; Isa 14.13-16; Ezek 28.12-19, and setting the judgment of God within a liturgical or cultic context. Because a temporary and mediated resolution to this exile is provided via the tabernacle cultus,²⁵⁶ the narrative may thus be read as prefiguring that cultus—serving to explain its logic and necessity.

1. THE PRIMEVAL EXILE

Upon breaking the commandment, Adam first hides himself from the Presence of the YHWH God (יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים *mipp^enê yhwh ʾlōhîm*), but is then driven out (יִגְרֹשׁ *y^egāreš*) so that, out of Eden, he is an exile and a wanderer.²⁵⁷ Gen 3.23-24 reads as follows:

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֱתֵּךְ אֱלֹהִים מִגֶּן־עֵדֶן

לְעֵבֶר אֶת־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִשָּׁם:

וַיִּגְרֹשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם

וַיִּשְׁכֵּן מִקְנָם לְגֶן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַקִּרְבִּים וְאֵת לֶהֱטֵ הַתְּרֵב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת

לְשׂוֹמֵר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

The narrative emphasis on Adam’s exile is manifest in (1) the repetition of YHWH’s action, (2) the intensifying of that action not only by repetition but from the verb’s escalation from “he sent

²⁵⁵ This is in accord with the structure of Gen 2-3 as identified by T.E. Boomershine (“The Structure of Narrative Rhetoric in Genesis 2-3” *Semeia* 18 [1980] 113-29): covenant establishment, rupture, and removal. Cf. R.W.L. Moberly’s analysis of the “Fall,” *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 70-87.

²⁵⁶ R.D. Nelson writes: “Sacrifices and a well-trained and faithful priesthood to offer them are the mechanisms by which Yahweh can graciously embrace an unclean and sinful people. ...Priestly ritual is therefore the means by which Yahweh can “accept” (root *rsh*) Israel. This concept of acceptance is central to the ‘gospel’ of the Priestly Writing” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priesthood*, 128-29).

²⁵⁷ Cf. K.R.R. Gros Louis, “The Garden of Eden,” 58.

out” (יָשַׁלְחַ, *yšall’h*) to “he drove out” (יָגָרֵשׁ, *yḡāreš*), (3) the twofold securing (לְשָׁמֹר *lišmōr*) of the entrance by YHWH with “the cherubim” (הַכְּרֻבִּים *hakk’rubîm*) and with “the flame of the swirling sword”²⁵⁸ (לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמְתַּהַפֶּקֶת *lahat haḥereb hammithappeket*), (4) by climactic mention of the loss of life via the tree (עֵץ הַחַיִּים *‘ēš haḥayyîm*), and (5) by the implied conclusiveness of the event inasmuch as the acts are executed by YHWH himself. Exile from the divine Presence, then, is *the* point of tragedy driving the ensuing biblical narrative toward the mediated denouement of the tabernacle cultus.²⁵⁹ Smith brings out this theme of the divine Presence when he writes:

Man’s relationship to God is described in terms of his walk in the presence of the Lord. Adam initially walked in communion with God. When Adam and Eve were cursed they were driven “from the presence of the LORD” (3.8, 24). Enoch (5.22) and Noah (6.9) “walked with God,” but Cain’s curse resulted in his “going out from the presence of the LORD” (4.16). The ultimate curse of removal from God’s presence is found in the flood incident when all flesh is blotted out.²⁶⁰

2. DISPLACEMENT

Understanding the nature of the garden is coextensive with appreciating the magnitude of its loss.²⁶¹ The garden itself, a dwelling-place of communion between YHWH and humanity, with the fecundating river and tree of life in its midst, was a sign of the glory of the divine Presence,

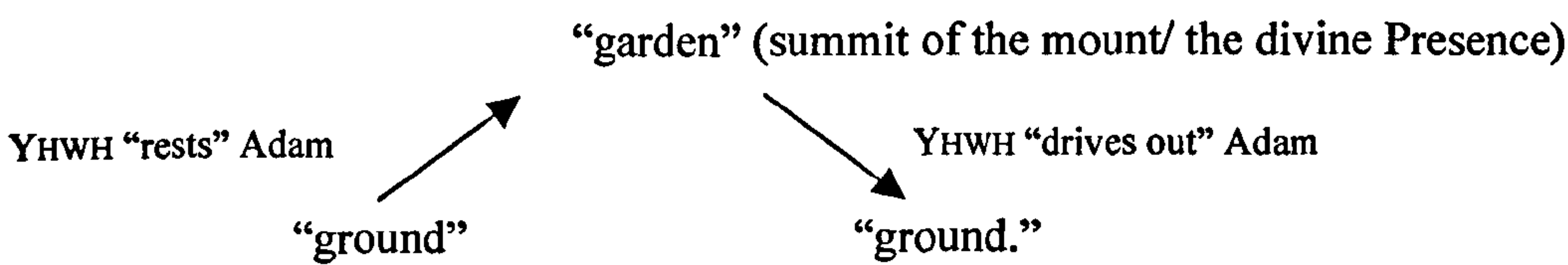
²⁵⁸ For the suggestion that this phrase refers to one of God’s fiery messengers, cf. P. Miller Jr., “Fire in the Mythology of Canaan and Israel” *CBQ* 27.4 (1965) 256-61; T.W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” *JBL* 90.1 (1971) 22f; R.S. Hendel, “The Flame of the Whirling Sword’: A Note on Genesis 3.24,” *JBL* 104.4 (1985) 671-74. Text 137 of the Ugaritic corpus is appealed to: (32) *išt. išt. yitmr/ ḥrb. lṣt* (33) [*lš/ bym*] *nhm* // “A flame, two flames/ Their tongues like sharpened swords.” Hendel also quotes from an Akkadian text: “Fire, the famous slayer,/ Whose hands are suited/ To wield his terrible weapons/ And to make his fierce swords(?) flash” (674). Cf. also E.T. Mullen, Jr., *The Assembly of Gods*, 140-1; S.M. Olyan, *A Thousand Thousands Served Him: Exegesis and the Naming of Angels in Ancient Judaism* (TSAJ 36; Tübingen: Mohr, 1993) 71-73. On the divine weapon, cf. N. Wyatt, “Arms and the King: The Earliest Allusions to the Chaokampf Motif and their Implications for the Interpretation of the Ugaritic and Biblical Traditions,” pp 151-89 in “*There’s Such Divinity doth Hedge a King*”: *Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (SOTS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), first published in ‘*Und Mose schrieb dieses Lied auf...*’. *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient. Festschrift für O. Loretz zur Vollendung seines 70. Lebensjahres mit Beiträgen von Freunden, Schülern und Kollegen*, M. Dietrich, I. Kottsieper, eds. (AOAT 250; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1998) 833-82.

²⁵⁹ For the theme of the divine Presence regained via the tabernacle cultus as the structural and theological center of the Hexateuch, as well as from Gen through 2 Kings, see E.G. Newing, “The Rhetoric of Hope: The Theological Structure of Genesis – 2 Kings,” *Colloquium* 17 (1985) 1-15.

²⁶⁰ G.V. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11” *JETS* 20 (1977) 315.

²⁶¹ Cf. C.G. Bartholomew’s description, e.g., in “The Theology of Place in Genesis 1-3,” 187.

and a seal of the divine will to give humanity himself.²⁶² Indeed, the movement from intimacy (Gen 2) to alienation (Gen 3) appears to be a major motif focusing and integrating the narrative.²⁶³ Now while attention is often paid to the purpose for Man’s being driven out of the garden as stated in the second clause of v 23 (to work “the ground” *hāʾdāmā*),²⁶⁴ yet the point may rather lie in the locative contrast of the third clause: “from the garden” (*miggan-ēden*) to “the ground,” the ground being the place “from which he was taken from there” (*šer luqqah miššām*). The reader is reminded that Adam was created from the dust of the ground (2.7) then YHWH had “placed him there” (*wayyāšem šām*)²⁶⁵ in the garden in the divine Presence (2.8). There had thus been a grace principle at work in Adam’s fellowship with the Creator.²⁶⁶ The parallel description of divine action in 2.15 has it that YHWH caused Adam “to rest” (*yanniḥêhû*) in the garden. Similarly, as we will see in the next chapter, Noah, who found “favor” (*ḥēn*) in the eyes of God, will have the Ark come “to rest” (*tānah*) at the summit of one of the Ararat mountains.²⁶⁷ The movement here in Genesis is thus:



²⁶² Cf. K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *The Doctrine of Creation*, part 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1958) 282.
²⁶³ See A.J. Hauser, “Genesis 2-3: The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation,” pp 20-36 in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*, D.J.A. Clines, D.M. Gunn, A.J. Hauser, eds. (JSOTSup 19; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1982).
²⁶⁴ For a persuasive reading of the text as Adam and Even also being expelled “from tilling the soil...,” cf. N. Wyatt, “When Adam Delved: The Meaning of Genesis 3.23,” *VT* 38 (1988) 117-22; G.J. Wenham, “Original Sin in Genesis 1-11,” *Churchman* 104.4 (1990) 315-16.
²⁶⁵ Hauge’s pointing out the corresponding applications of *šām* in Exod 19.2; 20.21, and 1 Kgs 19.9, and cf. Gen 22.4-5, may not be irrelevant (*The Descent from the Mountain*, 27f).
²⁶⁶ W.J. Dumbrell makes a similar point, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 56.
²⁶⁷ W.J. Dumbrell points out the parallel with Israel, created outside the divine space to be occupied, but brought in to continue the divine purpose for humanity’s royal, priestly role, later exile for transgressing the law, etc. (“Genesis 2.1-17,” 61-62).

This movement accords well with the cultic spatial movement identified in various psalms:

“...just as ‘life’ was experienced in the cult as being before the very presence of God in the (heavenly) temple, so ‘death’ was experienced in the cult as being cut off from that presence outside the temple. Both descent into Sheol and ascent to the temple had ritual accoutrements. ...The ritual movement [in Ps 30] from mourning to joy has mirrored a spatial movement from Sheol to temple, from the absence of God to the presence of God. ...Moreover, laments highlighted the themes of divine absence and descent, while songs of thanksgiving highlighted those of divine presence and ascent.”²⁶⁸

Being driven away from YHWH’s Presence, then, involves a descent, a ritual or symbolic movement downward, and reflected in the expulsion narrative (when the garden is understood to be located upon the summit of the holy mount of God).

Returning to the second clause of v 23 and to Adam’s purpose outside of the garden “to labor” (לַעֲבֹד *la‘^abōd*), even that purpose may be understood as functioning to emphasize displacement. When paralleled with the cherubim’s purpose “to guard (לִשְׁמֹר *lišmōr*) in v 24, there indeed seems to be a deliberate recalling of those same verbs in Gen 2.15 with the tragic change of place evident: “the man was put into the garden for ‘worship’ (*l’^eobdâh*) and ‘obedience’ (*l’šām‘râh*); but here in v 23, after the fall, the man is cast out of the garden ‘to work [*la‘^abōd*] the ground’ and ‘is kept’ (*lišmōr*) from ‘the way to the tree of life.’”²⁶⁹ Displacement, then, and as Bartholomew has shown, is central to “the horror of this judgment” and “fundamental to the entire Old Testament and presupposed at every point.”²⁷⁰ The expulsion thus constitutes the first stage shift, an important device in the Pentateuch, and represents a spatial movement that is down and away from God.²⁷¹ In Gen 4, moreover, the weight of Cain’s punishment is further (and continual) displacement.²⁷² Whatever the provenance of Gen 2-3, the

²⁶⁸ G.A. Anderson, “The Praise of God as Cultic Event,” pp 15-33 in *Priesthood and Cult in Israel*, G.A. Anderson, S.M. Olyan, eds. (JSOTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 28, 30, 32.

²⁶⁹ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 95.

²⁷⁰ C.G. Bartholomew, “The Theology of Place in Genesis 1-3,” 190-92.

²⁷¹ F.A. Murhpy, *The Comedy of Revelation: Paradise Lost and Regained in Biblical Narrative* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 80.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

Babylonian exile would surely have yielded an agonizingly sympathetic reading of this greatest of exiles. Losing the *place* of Eden meant losing the *Presence* of YHWH. And yet, as Westermann well noted, man can maintain his humanity only in the divine Presence—separated from God, he not only loses God but also the purpose of his humanity.²⁷³ Adam is now returned to existence before YHWH's gracious act of transplanting him on what we take to be the enclosed garden upon the summit of the holy mount. And thus the gate liturgy begins: when the only ascent had been by divine provision (and this for "unfallen" man), and having been driven out (as a transgressor) by YHWH himself, who now dares ascend?²⁷⁴ Indeed, the way has been barred in a twofold manner.

3. HOLY OF HOLIES AS FULLNESS OF LIFE

We are reading the garden of Eden as the archetypal holy of holies, with the divine Presence as the ultimate source of its holiness and blessing. Therefore, a deeper appreciation for primeval humanity's profound displacement is gained by understanding the biblical link between holiness and life. That "fullness of life" is intrinsic to God can be seen in Israel's concept of holiness which was fundamentally linked to the distinction between life and death, God's fullness of life making him utterly holy.²⁷⁵ Purity laws were thus determined by the approach to "the vivific character of the divine realm," so that if "something was not full of life or fully given over to life, it was deemed to be impure and was not allowed to approach the divine realm, often being

²⁷³ C. Westermann, *The Genesis Accounts of Creation*, 24.

²⁷⁴ This reading underscores the presumptuous character of the Tower of Babel project, gesturing toward its antipode in the tabernacle construction, the plans for which were divinely revealed (Exod 25.9, 40).

²⁷⁵ G.J. Wenham, "Why does Sexual Intercourse Defile?" 432.

physically relegated to the wilderness (Lev 4.11-12, 10.4-5, 13.46, 21.1-4).²⁷⁶ Whitekettle further explains that in

Levitical thought, the divine realm was located at the center of Israel's wilderness camp, in the tent-dwelling of Yahweh, the [G]od who created life and gave order to the cosmos. Contraposed to this spatial center was a periphery, located in the wilderness beyond the encampment, a place of disorder and desolation.²⁷⁷

Significantly, the wilderness, relegated to the periphery of life/holiness, is described in terms of the earth in Gen 1.2, in a state of *tōhû* (Deut 32.10), while the tabernacle holy of holies is described in terms of the Edenic garden,²⁷⁸ the connections between creation and the tabernacle being widely acknowledged as already reviewed.²⁷⁹ The theme of life in the account of creation, therefore, becomes emphatic when the layer of tabernacle symbolism is acknowledged:

[Mircea Eliade] suggests that the Garden of Eden story with its tree of life at the centre may be a type of later Israelite sanctuary which was regarded too as the source of life....According to later cultic ritual the sanctuary was the centre of life, *because there God was present*. To be excluded from the camp of Israel, like the...skin diseased, was to enter the realm of death. And those so afflicted behaved as though mourning someone's death (Lev 13.45-46). Thus the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden was in the narrator's view the real fulfillment of the divine sentence. He regarded their alienation from the divine presence as death.²⁸⁰

So, too, Anderson notes (in light of *Jubilees* 4.7) the "movement from Eden to the outside world was a movement from fertility and sexual joy to barrenness, mourning, and sexual

²⁷⁶ R. Whitekettle, "Levitical Thought and the Female Reproductive Cycle," 379. A. Cunningham, further, notes that the "idea of the Garden as a womb is an old one" ("Type and Archetype in the Eden Story," pp 290-309 in *A Walk in the Garden*, 292).

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ Interestingly, then, one needs both creation accounts (i.e., the complete portrayal of Gen 1-3) in order to encompass the ideology of the tabernacle cultus, from wilderness to the Holy of holies.

²⁷⁹ Many of these links will be reviewed below, cf. P.J. Kearney, "Creation and Liturgy," 375-87; S. Bakon, "Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath," *JBQ* 25 (1997) 79-85; G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*; E.W. Bolger, "The Compositional Role of the Eden Narrative in the Pentateuch" (PhD diss; Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1993); G.J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism"; Weinfield, "Sabbath, Temple, and the Enthronement of the Lord"; E. Bloch-Smith, "Who is the King of Glory?" 18-31.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 400, 404. Cf. M. Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 367-408 (emphasis added). Further, J. Blenkinsopp ("The Structure of P," 278) notes that the promise of divine presence ("I will be their God," Gen 17.8) is "fulfilled in the construction of the sanctuary and the establishment of the cult in the Sinaitic wilderness," which further accords with the connection of Eden and the tabernacle Holy of Holies in as much as God is the source of life.

continence,”²⁸¹ its very name likely contributing to this image.²⁸² The abundant life of Eden, if Gen 1-3 is taken at a synchronic level, serves as a full counterbalance to the “weltering waste” of the earth in Gen 1.2—and no less so when that abundance and fertility has the cosmic river (from a subdued primordial ocean?) for its source. Ultimately, God’s Presence in Eden, as well as in the tabernacle/temple, must be seen as the fertile source of all life-giving waters,²⁸³ the “heavenly river” disseminating spiritual life.²⁸⁴ The various depictions of a river flowing from the temple, then, serve to demonstrate that the access to the divine Presence via the cultus was meant to be understood in terms of a reentry into the paradise of the mountain of YHWH. Reentry, that is, into the divine Presence, for Eden was the garden of God, and God’s Presence was its central aspect.²⁸⁵ Walton similarly notes, in conclusion, that God’s

presence is seen as the fertile source of all life-giving waters. “It is not only the dwelling place of God. It is also the source of all the creative forces that flow forth from the Divine Presence, that energize and give life to the creation in a constant, unceasing outflow of vivifying power” (Neiman, 324). ... This concept is well known in the Bible. Ezekiel 47.1-12 shows the life-giving waters flowing from the temple (see also Ps 46.4; Zech 14.8). Perhaps the most familiar picture, however, comes in Revelation 22.1-2, where the river of the water of life flows from the throne of God. ... With this understanding, it can be appreciated that in the aftermath of the Fall, the greatest loss was not access to paradise; it was access to God’s presence.²⁸⁶

²⁸¹ G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 139. This suggestion is completely in accord with Whitekettle’s comparison between creation and the womb evident in levitical legislation.

²⁸² G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 136-37: “The very motif of the Garden of Eden, on its own terms, conjures up the imagery of sexuality and procreation. As the recent discovery of the Tel Fekharyeh material shows, the verbal root ‘-d-n has a very prominent association in Northwest Semitic religion with the storm god Baal/Hadad. The verbal root refers to the provisionment of fertility and blessing by this god. Late biblical texts make the very same association. In Isa 51.3 and Joel 2.3 the phrase “Garden of Eden” refers to the marvelous fertility of the land which divine blessing brings about. Ezekiel also characterizes the repopulated fertile landscape of a restored Israel as an Edenic garden (36.35).” Cf. also *idem.*, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 194-97.

²⁸³ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 182. Cf. M. Fishbane, “The Well of Living Water: A Biblical Motif and Its Ancient Transformations,” pp 3-16 in “*Sha’arei Talmon*,” for the correlation between symbolism of Yhwh as source of water. Cf. Ps 36.8-10; Jer 2.13; John 4.13-14. G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 196. Anderson’s fn 26 here notes: “The connection was noted by Ambrose in his work on the Paradise narratives. He draws a connection between this Psalm and the usage of the term Eden in Gen 2. He further identifies the imagery of Zion with Eden when he equates the river mentioned in Psalm 46 (a Zion psalm) with the rivers in Eden” (217).

²⁸⁴ B.K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 86-87.

²⁸⁵ W.J. Dumbrell, “Genesis 2.1-17,” 60.

²⁸⁶ J.H. Walton, “Eden, Garden of,” *DOTP* 205. Cf. S. Tuell, “The Rivers of Paradise.”

4. THE CHERUBIM

Rather than bringing Adam “to rest” in the garden of the tree of life, YHWH God “stationed” (יָשַׁקַּן *yaškēn*) the cherubim at the east of the garden “to guard” (לְשָׁמֹר *lišmōr*) “the way” (דֶּרֶךְ *derek*) to (the tree of) life (Gen 3.24). The word translated “stationed” or “placed,” (שָׁקַן *škn*) is freighted with tabernacle nuances, the tabernacle being the dwelling (מִשְׁכָּן *mškn*) of YHWH’s glory and utilizing garden imagery, including cherubim.²⁸⁷ The presence of cherubim functioning as “gatekeepers” is precisely what sets the narrative within the context of the gate liturgy.²⁸⁸ Kapelrud notes the cherubim of the garden narrative possess the two qualifications typical of Sumerian temple door-deities: (1) being doorkeepers and (2) having a certain divine (or mythological) character. As to the first attribute, he writes:

The quality of guardian (door-keeper) seems to be kept where the cherubim are spoken of as carved images on the gold-plated cedar planks on the inner walls of the temple and upon the olive wood doors (1 Kgs 6.29-35, II Chr 3.7). The ornamentations here reveal an ancient, mythical thought. The same is, apparently, the case also when the cherubim are spoken of as woven into the texture of the inner curtains of the tabernacle (Ex 26.31, 36.8), and, especially, when they are mentioned as woven into the veil of the *d’bâr*, hiding the ark (Ex 26.31, 36.35, II Chr 3.14).²⁸⁹

Considering the second qualification, Kapelrud points to the cherubim’s association with deity, and to parallels with other quasi-divine creatures that performed similar functions, such as the *šēdu*, the *lamassu*, and the *kuribi* of Assyrian-Babylonian religion.²⁹⁰ As discussed in our introductory chapter, the creature-guardian statues emplaced near the temple gates/doors throughout the ancient Near East are an aspect of gate liturgy inasmuch as their purpose is to protect sacred space from profanation. The narrative of Gen 3 purports to be the source of such a

²⁸⁷ Cf. G.J. Wenham’s, “Sanctuary Symbolism.”

²⁸⁸ The cherubim’s customary function within the context of the gate liturgy is aside from their “special” function in Ezek 1.15, 10.1ff. Cf. A.S. Kapelrud, *The Gates of Hell and the Guardian Angels of Paradise*, *JAOS* 70.3 (1950) 154.

²⁸⁹ A.S. Kapelrud, “The Gates of Hell,” 153. He also mentions on the same page 1 Kgs 6.23-28, 8.6-7, II Chr 3.10-13, 5.7f, suggesting the cherubim here are perhaps best understood “as a kind of doorleaves” in the shape of wings.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 154-55.

tradition—the original primeval event when the cherubim were literally stationed to guard the mount of YHWH, and thus explaining the rationale behind the temple liturgy itself.

5. THE FLAME OF THE WHIRLING SWORD

In addition to the creature-guardians at the garden entrance, “the flame of the whirling sword” (לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמְתַּהַפֶּקֶת *lahaṭ haḥereḇ hammithappeket*) is also put there by God. As the cherubim decorate the veil so as to guard the way to the tabernacle/temple Holy of holies (Exod 26.31, 36.35; II Chron 3.14), it may be the flame of the swirling sword finds its typological counterpart in the altar of the same cultus.²⁹¹ Hendel, who translates לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמְתַּהַפֶּקֶת as “flame (a deity) of the whirling sword,” draws a parallel to the West Semitic god *Rešep* or “flame,” whose name is found in three Phoenician inscriptions from the fourth century B.C. in construct with a weapon (“*Rešep* of the Arrow”), and who is also described as a “gatekeeper.”²⁹² What is also significant for our purposes is that the inscriptions are upon an altar and two hearths,²⁹³ dedicated fittingly to the flame deity—thus drawing a correspondence between the flame and the altar. To be sure, the Hebrew Bible is filled with descriptions of a sword “devouring” (אָכַל *akal* cf. Deut 32.42; 2 Sam 2.26; 11.25; 18.8; Isa 1.20; 31.8; Jer 2.30, etc.),²⁹⁴ precisely the action of the altar fire. Sword and fire appear to be in parallel, for example, in Ezek 23.25 (“your remnant will fall by the sword”// “your remnant will be devoured by fire”). Similarly, Nah 3.15 reads:

²⁹¹ While he offers no support, exegetical or otherwise, M. Kline states that “any future return to God’s dwelling-place and the tree of life must involve a passage through the flaming sword of God’s judgment, with which the new guardians of the sanctuary were armed. This message too is typologically conveyed in Israel’s history, in the cultus so arranged that an altar with the sacrificial sword stood before the holy dwelling, itself bounded by representations of cherubim in the colors of flaming fire” (*Kingdom Prologue*, 137).

²⁹² R.S. Hendel, “The Flame of the Whirling Sword,” 673 and fn 17.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ Jer 12.12 is, perhaps, significant here inasmuch as it is the “sword of YHWH” that devours, an ascription that may allude to Gen 3.24. The “blade” Abraham takes along with “the fire” to slay his son is formed from the word “to devour,” הַמֵּאֲכָלִית *hamma’akelet* (Gen 22.6). This account of the “binding” of Isaac, notably, takes place upon a mountain (presumably where Solomon’s temple would be built), and, having lexical and thematic parallels with Lev 8-9 and Lev 16 (Day of Atonement), may be said to prefigure the entire cultic economy. Cf. S.D. Walters, “Wood, Sand and Stars: Structure and Theology in Gn 22.1-19,” *TJT* 3.2 (1987) 301-30.

שם תאכלך אש There the fire will devour you
תכריחך חרב The sword will cut you off
תאכלך כילק It²⁹⁵ will devour you like a locust

Isa 34.6 is probably not irrelevant here either as it mentions “the sword of YHWH” (חרב ליהוה) (*hereb layhwh*) in the context of cultic sacrifice imagery:

חרב ליהוה מלאה דם The sword of YHWH is filled with blood
הדשנה מחלב swelling with fatness
מדם קרים ועתודים from the blood of lambs and goats
מחלב כליות אילים from the fat of the kidneys of rams
כי זבח ליהוה בבצרה because YHWH has a sacrifice in Bozrah
ושבח גדול בארץ אדום and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.

But further, the four horns of the altar are likely explained cosmologically, relating to the four cardinal points of direction,²⁹⁶ a symbolism paralleling the sword’s whirling “every which way” (הפך in the *hitpael*). Thus the way to the tree of life in the garden of God, as with the approach to the holy of holies, is guarded by a flame that reaches every direction, suggesting there is no approach apart from being devoured²⁹⁷—a thought we will return to in our fourth chapter.

6. THE GATE OF EDEN

YHWH God’s expulsion of the primal couple and his placing the cherubim and flaming sword to guard the garden’s (gate) entrance become particularly poignant apologies for the necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. If it may justly be said that Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy all focus to some degree on the way of approaching God through the worship of the tabernacle, then the expulsion from the divine Presence in the garden Sanctuary becomes a manifest “key” to understanding the Pentateuch as well as the tabernacle cultus. The association, all ready developed but relevant here, between the garden and the tabernacle/temple was

²⁹⁵ If the “it” here (fem. sing. form of the verb) refers to the preceding “sword,” as seems reasonable, then the parallel is strengthened as both the fire and the sword are said to devour.

²⁹⁶ Cf., e.g., the study note in *The Jewish Study Bible: JPS Tanakh Translation*, A. Berlin, et. al., eds. (New York: Oxford U Press, 2004) 1047; M.A. Sweeney, *The Twelve Prophets* (Berit Olam; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000) 582.

²⁹⁷ It is possible, then, this understanding informed the substitutionary aspect of sacrifice in Israel’s cultus.

recognized by the Jewish sages as evident in the midrash that states when YHWH drove out Adam “from the garden of Eden he revealed to him the destruction of the temple” (*Bereshit Rabbah* 21.8). The Hebrew Bible itself appears to draw a parallel when, with Hosea 9.15 as an example, similar language is used for the exile of Israel:

עַל רָעָם מַעַלְלֵיהֶם Because of the wickedness of their deeds
מִבֵּיתִי אֶנְרָשָׁם From my house/temple I will drive them out

This idea is only strengthened, further, if Joaquim Azevedo’s reading of Genesis 4.7, whereby he concludes that Adam’s children brought their sacrifices to the gate of Eden, is accepted.²⁹⁸

Without rehearsing his argument, based on grammatical and syntactical considerations, contextual and background analysis, he posits an understanding of Gen 4.7 as: “If you do not do what is right, fix it with the sacrificial offering lying at the doorway of Paradise, then his [Abel’s] desire will be to you and you will rule over him again.”²⁹⁹ Davidson appears to take a similar reading when he writes:

After Adam and Even are expelled, in their sinful state they are no longer able to meet with God face to face in the Garden. But...the Gate of the Garden becomes the Sanctuary where Adam and Eve and their descendants were to meet with God, worship Him, and bring their sacrifices. Here the Shekinah glory was manifested as God came down to hold communion with them.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ J. Azevedo, “At the Door of Paradise,” 45-59. Cf. J.N. Lohr (“Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain: Genesis 4.1-16 in the Masoretic Text, the Septuagint, and the New Testament,” *CBQ* 71.3 [2009] 485-96) who, although formulating a different translation brings up interpretive issues that, to our mind, favor Azevedo’s reading. For the transfer of the “tent-oracle tradition” from patriarchal religion (with theophanies/sacrifice at the door/opening/entrance of the father’s tent) to the national Israelite cultus centered on the Mosaic tabernacle, cf. A.M. Cooper and B.R. Goldstein, “At the Entrance to the Tent: More Cultic Resonances in Biblical Narrative,” *JBL* 116.2 (1997) 201-215; V.H. Matthews, “Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors: Legally Significant Sites in the Ancient Near East,” *Fides et Historia* 19.3 (1987) 25-40, who writes of the city gate: “The gate in this way marked the legal boundary between the outside world and the world of the city. It has also been demonstrated in texts from the ancient Near Eastern cultures that gates operate ‘in certain contexts...as a “channel” between to regions’ –the world of men and the ‘enclosed world’ of the god or king....the gate provided a link between two realms of existence. The gate was the tie that bound the average citizen to the operations of his government and of the temple” (26); M. Haran, “The Non-Priestly Image of the Tent of *MO’ED*,” pp 260-275 in *Temple and Temple Service in Ancient Israel*; E.A. Speiser, “‘Coming’ and ‘Going’ at the ‘City’ Gate,” *BASOR* 144 (Dec 1956) 20-23; J. Baines, “Temple Symbolism,” 12 (for the liminal symbolism of temple doors in Egypt). For more structural/thematic similarities between Gen 2-3 and 4, complementary to Azevedo’s thesis, cf. A.J. Hauser, “Linguistic and Thematic Links Between Genesis 4:1-16 and Gen 2-3,” *JETS* 23.4 (1980) 297-305.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

³⁰⁰ R.M. Davidson, “Cosmic Metanarrative,” 112. He further writes (same page): “The battle [for worship] rages in the story of Cain and Abel; the issue is true worship, and the battlefield is the place of worship, the Sanctuary.”

To be sure, it can hardly be insignificant that Gen 4.7 presents the first usage of the thematically rich term “door” (פֶּתַח *petah*), and in relation to sacrifice.³⁰¹ Eden’s entrance (3.24) is not only a reasonable referent for the door in 4.7, but the cherubim mentioned in 3.24 also correspond, in a cultic setting, “to the apprehension of the shrine as a door to heaven.”³⁰² Indeed, stationed cherubim, at an eastward entrance—what else can this be but a temple gate? An ancient reading of Gen 3.24 may have recognized, then, not only a threatening barrier to garden entry, but a cultic site, in other words, the place where YHWH, in the consuming theophany of his fiery Presence, was “enthroned on the cherubim” (יָשַׁב הַכְּרוּבִים *yōšēb hakk’rûbîm* Ps 80.2; 99.1). In the tabernacle cultus, which likely serves as a conceptual backdrop to the narrative, the door of the tent served as the place to which the people came to present their offerings to YHWH (Exod 40.29; cf. Lev 4.7, 18).³⁰³ The cultic material of the Pentateuch, in other words, demonstrates a concern that sacrificial ritual takes place “before YHWH” (לִפְנֵי יְהוָה *lipnê yhwh*) or “at the door of the tent of meeting,”³⁰⁴ making the garden entrance the likely place of sacrifice since the previous narrative has already marked Eden as the locus of divine Presence, not to mention that most occurrences of the phrase “before YHWH” have a sanctuary or shrine clearly in mind.³⁰⁵ Thus not only does the conception of paradise as sanctuary already involve its being a place for cultic sacrifice,³⁰⁶ but also that the ritual is being performed before the divine Presence.³⁰⁷

³⁰¹ F. Gorman, e.g., notes how the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Lev 8-9 focuses especially on the door of the tent of meeting, they remaining at the door for a seven day period (*The Ideology of Ritual*, 49).

³⁰² T. Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden*, 293. Cf. E. Brovarski, “The Doors of Heaven,” *Orientalia* 46 (1977) 107-15.

³⁰³ F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 57.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 38. Cf. Exod 29.42-46 where YHWH says: “There [at the door of the tent of meeting] I will make myself known to the children of Israel.”

³⁰⁵ See M.D. Fowler, “The Meaning of *lipnê* YHWH in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 99.3 (1987) 384-90, who, while affirming the point referenced, adds proper nuance against assuming this phrase in connection with cultic activity is evidence *per se* of a permanent shrine.

³⁰⁶ Cf. J.M. Lundquist’s proposition 14, “What is a Temple?” 217-18.

CONCLUSION

In this section we have considered how the creation account of Genesis 1, through the seventh day and the *imago Dei/ imitatio Dei* dynamic, presents “worship” as the *telos* of creation. Noting also how the garden narrative, filled with sanctuary symbolism, portrays humanity in priestly terms, we examined the expulsion of Genesis 3 and argued for the gate liturgy as its conceptual backdrop. This reading, as we had occasion to address in the introductory section of this chapter, goes far towards justifying its canonical position and (traditional) theological weight in as much as it becomes the foundational story that explains the logic and necessity of the tabernacle/temple and compels the fundamental entrance liturgy of the cultus. Read as a whole, from the majesty of Creator and creation in Gen 1, to the holy intimacy of the sanctuary garden atop the mountain of God in Gen 2, the so-called “fall” of Gen 3 is a descent indeed.

IV. THE TABERNACLE PRE-FIGURED (OR CREATION RE-FIGURED)

A. *Experiencing Eden*

As we have stressed repeatedly, interpreting Gen 1 and 2-3 in light of cosmic mountain ideology creates a smooth transition between them, with all three chapters bound together as “cultic” literature. What we thus find in the final canonical form of Gen 1-3 is creation unfolding as the construction of a cosmic temple, with the garden of Eden as its holy of holies, and humanity portrayed in priestly terms with the high vocation of worship.³⁰⁷ This reading of the narrative further strengthens the suggestion that Gen 1-3 looks forward to the construction of the

³⁰⁷ Another line of argument would entail the consideration of the gates (of a city) as the typical place of judgment, and thus as the natural referent in God’s confrontation with Cain—i.e., while the term itself is not used, the locale may be presumed. V.H. Matthews, noting that justice/judgment was often executed at the city gates, states that this procedure “is a step beyond trial by ordeal, which is an appeal to the god/s to make a judgment of guilt or innocence” (“Entrance Ways and Threshing Floors,” 28).

³⁰⁸ J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 14.

tabernacle.³⁰⁹ Levenson captures well the significance of Gen 1.1-2.3 in relation to the cultus of Israel:

Cosmogony is not fully grasped until it has been related to the microcosm and to the rites that took place there and were thought to allow human participation in the divine ordering of the world...The reality that the Sabbath represents—God’s unchallenged and uncompromised mastery, blessing, and hallowing—is consistently and irreversibly available only in the world to-come. Until then, it is known only in the tantalizing experience of the Sabbath...Genesis 1.1-2.3, the Priestly creation story, is not about the banishment of evil, but about its control. It describes a process of separation and distinction making in which the dark, ungodly forces are effortlessly overcome by placement in a structure in which they are bounded by new realities created by divine speech alone. This new structure is essentially cultic in character. Its construction is highly reminiscent of the rites of temple building... More important, in building the new structure that is creation, God functions like an Israelite priest, making distinctions, assigning things to their proper category and assessing their fitness, and hallowing the Sabbath... Among the many messages of Genesis 1.1-2.3 is this: it is through the cult that we are enabled to cope with evil, for it is the cult that builds and maintains order, transforms chaos into creation, ennobles humanity, and realizes the kingship of the God who has ordained the cult and commanded that it be guarded and practiced.³¹⁰

Turning to Gen 2-3, moreover, one can appreciate how the story of “the Fall” via a liturgical lens presents more than an explanation for the presence of evil in the world, but is, rather, a catechesis about the utter necessity for, and profound logic of, the tabernacle cultus.³¹¹ In this sense, one

³⁰⁹ G.J. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 403.

³¹⁰ J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 91, 123, 127. See also A. Richardson, *Genesis I-XI: Introduction and Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1953) 43: “The distinctive character of the P Creation story is displayed not only by the stylized phrases, often repeated, but by the whole Priestly conception of the created world as the scene of the manifestation of the glorious majesty of God – “even his everlasting power and divinity” (Rom 1.20). The universe as God planned and made it is like P’s ideal Tabernacle: everything in it reflects the glory of God...everything performs its duly ordained liturgical office, like the priests and Levites of the sanctuary in their appointed courses.” Similarly, C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest,” 82: “Both accounts in Genesis 1-3 describe the contents and order of creation in terms of ancient temple building in general and Israel’s peculiar vision of sacred space in particular. “The whole universe must be regarded as the highest and, in truth, the holy temple of God” (Philo, *De spec. leg.* I:66) just as the cult (the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple) is a microcosm of the whole of creation. Tabernacle and Temple are organized to reflect Israel’s understanding of the structure of the cosmos, and the worship and rituals of the cult actualize and guarantee the God-intended order and stability of creation.”

³¹¹ While some scholars critique the classic significance of the narrative by claiming the Old Testament appears to make no use of the story, our reading of the expulsion as explaining (and effectively initiating the gate liturgy) is full in accord with the narrative’s contextual weight, being located at the beginning of the canon (cf. R.W.L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 70ff). This understanding, further, is merely interpretation in light of context: “The first chapters of the Bible are an integral part of the Pentateuch at the center of which is set the account of the exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Sinai, the two events which constitute the basis for the formation of the people of Israel....It is a symbolic presentation of a caesura in the basic design of Creation which resulted in a shattering of the original relationship between God and man that can be reconciled only through the Covenant at Sinai. Theologically, the garden of Eden narrative is the midpoint between Creation and Covenant, and can only be understood within the context of this continuum,” (Bernard Och, “The Garden of Eden,” 143 fn 1); “The priestly account of creation in Genesis 1.1-2.4a...confers upon Israel and her cultic institutions a legitimacy and validity within the given orders of creation” (J.E. Atwell, “An Egyptian Source for Genesis 1,” 441). Cf. also A.P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory*, 81-116.

can say creation is the end and redemption the means to that end, enabling humanity to enter into the *telos* of creation.³¹² Since the theology of the Old Testament, assuming McKenzie is correct, must be a study of the reality of YHWH, then one might expect the cult, as the normal and most frequent manner in which Israel experienced YHWH,³¹³ to be a prominent aspect of that theology and of the biblical literature, as we are indeed discovering. In any case, the tabernacle and later temple, as Childs notes, represented in concrete form the heart of *Priestly* theology, namely, that God is holy and no human being can approach the divine Presence unprepared.³¹⁴ Understood as such, the question underlying the gate liturgy—"Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?"—will be seen to spring out of the very depths of this theological heart, the cultus itself signifying its mediated answer. Against the backdrop of the tabernacle cultus, then, the message of primal humanity's exile in Gen 3 becomes: all hope is not lost for the descendants of Adam because the experience of the divine life and delights of Eden can be recaptured in the world of the cult.³¹⁵

When the paradisiacal delights of Eden are understood as mere sacramental tokens of life in the

³¹² B. Och, "Creation and Redemption," 230.

³¹³ J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 29, 32. Further, R.D. Nelson writes: "For a long period ritual remained at the very heart of Yahwistic religion. It was not something peripheral or ancillary. It is striking that most of the Hebrew Bible's theological and ethical vocabulary had its roots in the world of sacrifice and cult" (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 101).

³¹⁴ B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 163. So-called "priestly" theology may yet prove, whether by ascribing its final redaction to P or otherwise, the determinative theology of the Pentateuch. This understanding, further, is in line with R.D. Nelson's statement: "Ritual may be seen as the backbone of religion, for it can be carried on even when faith is weak. Moreover, a people actually learns what it believes from the way it worships" (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 89). Nelson considers the Priestly Writing in the Pentateuch the Hebrew Bible's most extensive expression of priestly theology (105).

³¹⁵ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 204. J.H. Sailhamer makes a similar connection: "The garden, like the tabernacle, was the place where humankind could enjoy the fellowship and presence of God" (*Genesis*, 75). C.J. Collins, *Genesis 1-4*, 185-86, 245: "But even though physical access to the garden and to the tree of life is now closed for mankind, that does not mean that man cannot come into God's presence. In particular, the sanctuary is the way of access to God's presence, in its public worship and sacramental rites that address human guilt. This becomes a foretaste of eschatological glory, where the old wound in man and nature will be healed, and it equips the covenant people for perseverance in the covenant under the forgiving grace of God...[T]he covenant ordinances (sacrifices, etc.) were the way back to 'Eden.'" J.N. Walton, "Eden, Garden of," *DOTP* 205: "the garden is understood to be the ante-chamber of the Holy of Holies (Eden) in the cosmic temple complex. With this understanding, it can be appreciated that in the aftermath of the Fall, the greatest loss was not access to paradise; it was access to God's presence. The temple provided for a partial return of that presence, and the antechamber of the temple was reminiscent of the proximity to God's presence that had once been enjoyed."

divine Presence, then one comes to see that a cultic return to the divine Presence is, in effect, the way back to Eden. In a profound sense, then, life—the essence of being—is liturgical, so that worship not only fulfills the *telos* of human vocation but of creation itself. Liturgy sustains creation:

In Torah's vision, the world is created as part of a grand, cosmic liturgical celebration. The liturgy culminates on the seventh day (Gen 2.1-3), the primordial foundation for the institution of the Sabbath day (cf. Ex 31.12-17). ...It is not just that the tabernacle and its rituals correspond to God's created order. The Torah also understands Israel's ritual world to have the capacity to sustain and, if necessary, to restore God's design for creation. ...[T]he ritual for the Day of Atonement (Lev 16) [for example], seeks both to address and repair the breakdown in divinely established distinctions of holy/profane, pure/impure, and order/chaos. As the Torah understands creation to be the context within which God summons forth the liturgy of worship, so its concomitant focus on the tabernacle suggests that worship is itself an important constitutive act that sustains and reclaims God's intentions for the created order. ...Though the *summons* to worship is an extension of God's creative liturgy of creation, the *act* of worship is an extension of God's creative work into the community-building and world-building that uphold the order of creation. ...In the liturgy of Genesis 1-2, the crucial intersection between the ordered world *qua* ritual world and the relational world is the seventh day...Inasmuch as the Torah begins with the enunciation of a distinctive world order in which God's crowning act of creation is the seventh/sabbath day, it anticipates that the ritual of worship...will be empowered both to sustain and to redeem the world of God's design.³¹⁶

What the tabernacle is to space, the Sabbath is to time, re-creating the original "seventh day" and thus defining the nature of worship as a re-entry into the divinely-indwelted cosmos before the cataclysmic rupture.³¹⁷ In its final canonical form, Gen 1-3 may thus be said to pre-figure the

³¹⁶ S.E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 63-68, 81, 90. "In the composite vision that connects God, cosmos, and humankind, the critical intersection occurs on the seventh day (2.1-3)" (83).

³¹⁷ J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," 297-98: "The world which the Temple incarnates in a tangible way is not the world of history but the world of creation, the world not as it is but as it was meant to be and as it was on the first Sabbath....The glory that had filled the world now fills the Tabernacle and its successors, the Temples of Jerusalem. The Temple is the world before the divine contraction, the world in a state of grace and perfection. No wonder temples in the ancient Near East sometimes contained a paradisaal garden and no wonder that Zion, the Temple mountain, "perfect in beauty" (Ps 50.2; Lam 2.15), was equated with the Garden of Eden. The Temple offers the person who enters it to worship an opportunity to rise from a fallen world, to partake of the Garden of Eden. The Temple is to space what the Sabbath is to time, a recollection of the protological dimension bounded by mundane reality. It is the higher world in which the worshipper characteristically wishes he could dwell forever (Pss 23.6; 27.4)." Cf. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 127-28, 133: "The sanctuary, then, is a place in which reality is perceived as a whole, as fresh and untarnished, where the costs exacted by the harshness of normal life are not paid. The animals offered there, like the clergy who present them, are unblemished ([Lev] 22.20); the materials used in the very construction of the shrine are precious and pure (Exodus 25-30). Once something has been designated for the realm of the sacred, once it has passed into that zone of perfection, it cannot be easily withdrawn (Lev 22.12-16; Num 6.9-20), for the sanctuary is an enclave of ideal reality within the world of profanity. Words like 'ideal,' 'perfection,' and 'unblemished,' suggest that the Temple was, in fact, a paradise. A biblical tradition, in common with the stories of origins found in many cultures, maintained that human experience began in a paradise, called the 'Garden of Eden,' the last word denoting in Hebrew 'luxury' or 'delight.' ...In short, the Temple is intimately associated with creation. It is, in a sense, the gateway to life as it was meant to be, unlimited by death, eternal life,

tabernacle cultus in as much as this account serves to explain the logic and necessity of that cultus.

B. Re-Figuring Creation

This “pre-figuration” of the tabernacle in the narrative involves, at least for the modern reader, a “re-figuration” of Creation itself. What does the majestic opening line of the Hebrew and Christian canons *mean*—or, perhaps better, what did it mean for the original audience—when it says that God created “the heavens and the earth”? That this phrase may have been understood in ancient Israel as inclusive of the cosmic mountain is a plausible suggestion—found the more so by synthesizing some of our previous lines of reasoning. When considering creation as a “three-decked house” earlier, it was noted that “the heavens and the earth” is short for and inclusive of a three-fold cosmology: heavens, earth, and sea.³¹⁸ This three-fold cosmology is paralleled and symbolized by the tripartite structure of the tabernacle/temple. Because, further (and as we will have occasion to consider in our fourth chapter), the tabernacle/temple is modeled after the cosmic mountain, we have the following parallel ideas:³¹⁹

CREATION	≈	COSMIC MOUNTAIN	≈	CULTUS
Heavens		Summit		Holy of Holies
Earth		Mid-Section		Holy Place
Seas		Base		Outer Court

The parallel between the holy of holies, as the divine throne room, and “the heavens” is evident, for example, in Ps 11.4: “YHWH’s throne is in the heavens,” and also explains the logic of why Eden, at the summit of God’s holy mount, should be so richly and symbolically equated with the

life *in illo tempore*, sacred time, always new, always just created”; G.A. Anderson, “Celibacy or Consummation?” 130: “Like the Temple, the Sabbath day was characterized by rest; only the work required for Temple sacrifices was allowable on it....[The author of Jubilees] highlights its eschatological significance. The Sabbath is said to be ‘a day of the holy kingdom for all Israel’ (50.9)....This phrase portrays the Sabbath as a foretaste of the eschatological era when Israel would return to her status as a world empire....The Sabbath is a means of actualizing, in a non-Temple environment, the requirements of Temple existence.”

³¹⁸ That this was still the case in the first century AD is evident in the prayer recorded in Acts 4.24: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them....”

³¹⁹ Cf. M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 65f, for parallels between the bronze sea/courtyard and the primeval sea.

tabernacle/temple holy of holies. The cultic symbolism discernable in the accounts of Gen 1-3 is already suggestive that such a paradigm of creation as cosmic mountain/temple is in view in Gen 1.1. But further evidence is found when one looks to the description of the new creation in Isaiah 65.17-25:

v 17: "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth..." / בֹּרָא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים וְאָרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה
 → v 18: "...For behold, I create Jerusalem..."
 → v 25: "...They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain."

Here, the phrase "new heavens and a new earth" is equated with creating (בֹּרָא) the city of Jerusalem, understood as the cosmic mountain Zion as demonstrated by the final synonymous phrase "my holy mountain." If the new "heavens and earth" has its primary significance found in God's holy mountain, then is there any reason to exclude this significance from the creation of the former "heavens and earth"? Indeed, we have already sought to demonstrate the creation account(s) are best understood in terms of cosmic mountain ideology, fraught as they are with sanctuary symbolism. Previously we also noted Levenson's suggestion that "the heavens and the earth" in Gen 1.1 may be a reference to Jerusalem/land of Israel itself.³²⁰ Before him, Fisher had already shown the possibility of a synonymous relationship between city, temple, and cosmos, arguing that עִיר 'îr, typically translated "city," can also mean temple quarter or the inner room of the temple, and can be equated with the mountain of God.³²¹ Whether or not this should be brought to bear upon the opening verse of Genesis, that the "land" of Israel came to be signified by the "mountain" of Zion,³²² opens up possibilities with regard to reading "the land" (הָאָרֶץ *hā'āreš*) in the Gen 1 creation account with reference to the holy mountain. There is nothing, in other words, to keep one from understanding the dry land that emerged from the primal sea and

³²⁰ J.D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," 295. If this were the case, such a reading would lend new profundity to Jacob's discovery and exclamation: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!" (Gen 28.17).

³²¹ L.R. Fisher, "The Temple Quarter," *JSS* 8.1 (1963) 34-41.

³²² Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 136-37.

subsequently called “earth” in vv 9-10 as inclusive of the holy mountain of God, especially given the ubiquitous ANE concept of the primeval mound discussed in the previous chapter, along with Ezekiel’s paralleling of the garden with the mount (Ezek 28.13-14):

בְּעֵדֶן גֶּן-אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתָ / you were in the garden of God
בְּהַר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים הָיִיתָ / you were on the holy mountain of God

Taken as a whole, Gen 1-3 may be read in such a way as to see that “the Garden of Eden was the first dry land created in the midst of the primeval waters,” and to suggest that

the garden of Eden and the temple had at one time been one and the same. When the Lord triumphed over chaos and ordered the creation he *did* establish his temple in Jerusalem, according to the creation story presupposed in the Psalms. This temple ‘was’ the garden of God on the summit of the holy mountain.³²³

Thus, the cosmology (and cosmogony) symbolized in the tabernacle/temple cultus, helps us to refigure creation itself.

CONCLUSION

Genesis 1-3, to summarize the path we’ve trod thus far, portrays creation as a cosmic temple, the garden of Eden as the original holy of holies, and primal Man as a priest. This chapter’s examination of the creation account(s), further, developed what we have called a cosmogonic pattern whereby the primordial waters are preliminary to the mount of worship, establishing the cosmology of cosmic mountain ideology foundational to the tabernacle/temple cultus. Creation’s *telos* of worship is, then, the goal of the earth’s (and, thus, primeval Man’s) divine deliverance from the waters,³²⁴ a pattern we will find duplicated in the deluge and sea crossing narratives. Establishing this cosmic mountain paradigm for approaching the divine Presence, Gen 1-3 sets forth God as water-controller, and the waters surrounding his mount as the (subjugated) primeval

³²³ M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 57, 64 (emphasis original).
³²⁴ By favoring a transcendent, monotheistic form of theogony for Gen 1, rather than cosmogony (which “is a libretto to the rites of the cult”), F.M. Cross views creation merely as “a first event—without significance—in a linear series of epic events” (“The ‘Olden Gods’ in Ancient Near Eastern Creation Myths,” pp 329-38 in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays in the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, P.D. Miller Jr, eds. [Garden City: Doubleday, 1976] 329, 336).

waters of chaos—both features being in accord with the judicial river ordeal. Adam dwelling upon the summit of the mount of YHWH, enjoying life in the divine Presence then issues forth into the whole question of the gate liturgy (“Who shall ascend?”), impressing itself implicitly as a consequence of the expulsion narrative. Thus the exile account of Gen 3, when considered within the cultic context of the gate liturgy, becomes manifestly key to the rest of the biblical narrative, a status more in accord with its significant canonical placement. Finally, because the tabernacle cultus is the means by which humanity may access the divine Presence once more, a line of argument developed canonically via ritual and intertextual links including the Sabbath, one is justified in reading Gen 1-3 as pre-figuring the tabernacle cultus, explaining its significance for the life of Israel. On this point, not only is creation presented as a temple in Gen 1, but God, with his acts of speech, division, and benediction, is likely portrayed as “the ultimate priest.”³²⁵ Exiled from the divine Presence, where might the faithful Israelite seek this blessing now if not mediated via the upraised palms of the high priest?

³²⁵ See M.S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*, 67, 103, 112.

CHAPTER THREE

The Deluge Account

I. Through the Waters: The Deluge as Judicial Ordeal

A. God as Righteous Judge

1. The Judicial Role of God as Main Character
2. The Judicial Character of God's Actions
3. The Judicial Characterization of the Objects of the מִבּוּל
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The Deluge

INTRODUCTION

As the archetype of human catastrophe,¹ hardly any event is better remembered by humanity than an ancient flood.² Within Genesis 1-11, Noah's *toledot* is the centerpiece, receiving the most extensive treatment as it unfolds the deluge epic.³ Given the significance of this narrative

¹ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, trans. J.J. Scullion (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984) 399.

² K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26* (NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1996) 98.

³ *Ibid.*, 349. Cf. also B. Waltke (with C.J. Fredricks), *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 121; N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis: The World of the Bible in the Light of History* (New York: Schocken, 1966) 43-44; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (Oxford: One World, 1998) 31. D. Clines calls it "climactic, marking a turning point in the history of mankind" ("The Theology of the

within the primeval history, as well as its acknowledged priestly trace,⁴ it would be surprising indeed if the story did not serve a greater cultic schema than presently acknowledged. Yet, while cosmic mountain ideology is an acknowledged backdrop to the religions of the ancient Near East, and to the tabernacle/temple cult of Israel in particular, sufficient attention to its function in this biblical narrative has been wanting. This void is the more critical in as much as there has been a growing development of temple theology in relation to the creation narrative(s), and the deluge has numerous acknowledged parallels, lexical and thematic correspondences, with Gen 1-3. This chapter will accordingly advance a reading of the deluge as liturgical narrative, that is, as understood in light of cosmic mountain ideology (or, alternatively, through the lens of temple typology), functioning to explain the necessity for and logic of the tabernacle/temple cultus. Approaching the cosmic mountain through an ordeal of waters will be seen to serve as a symbol for approaching God so that the idea of a “gate liturgy” (in a similar fashion to that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?”) will be highlighted. Seeking to understand the narrative within both its ANE and its cultic context, we will thus develop what in the previous chapter we have dubbed a cosmogonic or “liturgical” pattern of archetypal geography: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: THE DELUGE AS JUDICIAL ORDEAL

“Primarily,” notes Cassuto, the account of the flood “seeks to teach that the world is judged in accordance with righteousness, and that the Judge of the whole earth always acts justly towards

Flood Narrative,” *Faith and Thought* 100.2 [1972-3] 128), and W.M. Clark considers the flood story as “central to the primeval history” (“The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” *ZAW* 83 [1974] 184-211 [188]). Cf. G.A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1986) 23; W. Brueggemann’s chart in *Genesis* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 23.

⁴ The general consensus among Source critical scholars would have it that the various traditions were “joined and unified in a Priestly edition, thus forming the Pentateuch” (B.W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th ed. [Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1986] 453), while those ascribing to essential Mosaic authorship would see the Tabernacle cultus as a dominant context for the Torah.

both the wicked and the righteous.”⁵ This insight is in keeping with the idea of the river ordeal, as discussed in the introductory chapter and which constitutes a judgment through which the righteous are granted the refuge of the cosmic mountain while the wicked are consigned to the underworld. Considering Gen 1-3 within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, Adam is the righteous man able to ascend the holy hillock of YHWH. The prerequisite righteousness of Paradise is emphasized by the expulsion of Adam and Eve, upon their disobedience, from the garden of Eden—the cherubim posted at the gates.⁶ As G.A. Anderson stated:

The mountain of Eden was a holy spot. Because of this, access to its inner sanctum—the location of the tree of life—was carefully guarded. This mountain was divided into zones of holiness, just as Mount Sinai was. Only those of highest spiritual development could reside in its center. Others could derive its benefits only from a distance.⁷

Understanding the narrative within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, the *מבול* (*mabbûl* “deluge”) may be read as something of a cosmic river ordeal with the wicked suffering a watery judgment but through which the righteous are delivered to the refuge of the mountain. This in view, we will look at the narrative role of God as Judge, as well as the judicial nature of the deluge.

A. God the Righteous Judge of All the Earth

1. GOD AS MAIN CHARACTER IN ROLE OF JUDGE

As bookends of the primeval age, the creation and deluge narratives are deeply interwoven with thematic and lexical correspondences,⁸ the history of the “earth-that-was”⁹ ending as it began—

⁵ U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part II: From Noah to Abraham*, trans. I. Abrahams (Hebrew 1949; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992) 3.

⁶ The bann formula is applied conceptually to Adam. Cf. W.M. Clark, “The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 190.

⁷ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain: Eden and its Early Interpreters in Syriac Christianity,” pp 187-224 in *Genesis 1-3 in the History of Exegesis: Intrigue in the Garden*, G.A. Robins, ed. (Lewiston/Queenston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1988) 202.

⁸ Thus, W.H. Green (*The Unity of the Book of Genesis* [1895; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 4-5), who notes that many of the words and phrases of Gen 1 “occur nowhere else in Genesis, unless it be in the account of the flood,”

submerged in the abyss (the תְּהוֹם וְבִהְיוֹתָ *tōhû wābōhû* of Gen 1.2).¹⁰ One such correspondence is, perhaps, underappreciated, namely, that no less than in the account of creation, the deluge is portrayed as the accomplishment of the acts of God. Through predictive narrative (6.17,¹¹ 7.4¹²), by use of the *niphal* passives in 7.11 (all the fountains of the Deep were “burst asunder” [נִבְקְעוּ *nibq‘û*] and the windows of heaven “were opened” [נִפְתְּחוּ *niptāhû*])—as well as their counterparts in 8.2 (וַיִּסָּכְרוּ *wayyissākēru*, וַיִּכְלָא *wayyikkālē*), and by promissory declaration (9.15), the narrative clearly manifests the deluge as divinely wrought. Westermann highlights the feature that

the event is described as due entirely to God’s action; it is not “event” in our sense, but rather “action,” the work of a person. “It” does not rain, but God rains (or brings rain); the flood does not cause destruction, but God destroys. This is reinforced further by the relative clause “which I have made” [7.4]. It says that God is acting with the same directness in the flood as in the creation. The narrative is about an action of God who destroys his own work.¹³

Thus from the perspective of narrative plot and action, God is the main character in the story, the one whose emotions are exposed to us, who controls and drives the drama, including the role of the waters within it.¹⁴ As the main character, then, God’s judicial role, common in Israel and

relates the lexical parallels to the similarity of subject matter (i.e., the creation and recreation of the cosmos). G.J. Wenham, as most commentators, also notes the “many echoes of the creation account” (*Genesis 1-15* [WBC; Nashville: Nelson, 1987] 175), and C. Westermann likens the Flood’s basic structure “comprising the decision of God and its consequences” to the creation narratives (*Genesis 1-11*, 393). Cf. also the parallels brought out by R. Hendel, “*Leitwort* Style in the J Primeval Narrative,” pp 93-109 in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R.E. Friedman on His Sixtieth Birthday*, S. Dolansky, ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008); E. van Wolde, “A Text-Semantic Study of the Hebrew Bible, Illustrated with Noah and Job,” *JBL* 113.1 (1994) 23; W. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (1984; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1994) 9-15; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 351; B.K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 127-30; G.V. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11,” *JETS* 20 (1977) 307-19 (esp. 310-11); B.W. Anderson (with S. Bishop), *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999) 153.

⁹ Utilizing the terminology of 2 Peter 3.6: “ὁ τότε κόσμος”.

¹⁰ B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” pp 75-96 in *From Creation to New Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 93.

¹¹ G.J. Wenham notes, e.g., 6.17’s repetition of the personal pronoun makes it “perfectly clear that God is author of the flood” (*Genesis 1-15*, 174).

¹² Cf. N.M. Sarna’s comments on “I will make it rain” (*Genesis*, 54).

¹³ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 429.

¹⁴ Cf. E. van Wolde, “A Text-Semantics Study,” 23-24. V.P. Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990] 280) notes that Noah never speaks until 9.25: “Curse be Canaan!” Below,

deriving from his kingship (“YHWH reigns as king...he will judge the peoples righteously” Ps 96.10),¹⁵ is particularly dominant in the deluge plot. The biblical account of the deluge is distinguished from Mesopotamian parallels, moreover, by this role of God as Judge, with water being the means by which he executes his sentence.

2. THE JUDICIAL CHARACTER OF GOD’S ACTIONS

Concerning now the actions of God, the text manifests both clearly and intentionally their being the result of his “seeing” (ראה *r’ah*), phraseology with judicial overtones, involving investigation and consequent resolve.¹⁶ YHWH saw (ראה *wayyar*) the wickedness of man and resolved to destroy him (6.5-7); YHWH saw (ראה *rā’û*) the righteousness of Noah and bid him to enter the ark (7.1). Indeed, structurally, the opening of the narrative follows closely the prophetic lawsuit pattern of indictment and sentence.¹⁷ God’s declaration in 6.13, furthermore, has been recognized as comprising legal speech,¹⁸ the justice of the verdict made clear once more by God’s investigative action (ראה) and by the report on his findings (וְהִנֵּה *w’hinēnî*). Thus, to better understand how the narrative would have been read as a judgment ordeal, one needs to focus in on a basic and oft taken-for-granted point: God caused the deluge as an event of retributive justice—that is, the destruction of the cosmos is no less a direct act of God than its creation, and

the idea of Noah as “hero” of the story will be posited. R.E. Longacre notes “God is the central participant in that we are told His feelings and no one else’s, not even Noah’s” (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” pp. 235-62 in *SBLASP*, G. MacRae, ed. [Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976] 237), a rare feature which links the Deluge Narrative with that of Creation (Gen 1-3). Below, however, aspects of the narrative that portray Noah as something of a hero will be considered.

¹⁵ S. Paas: “As the highest King, YHWH is also the highest Judge. It is His duty to judge the world in justice and to rule the peoples in a fair manner (Pslam 9.9)” (*Creation & Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eight Century Prophets* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 86). Cf. also M.C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds* (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990) 287-89; K.W. Whitelam, *The Just King: Monarchical and Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup 12; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1979).

¹⁶ N. Sarna, *Genesis*, 47.

¹⁷ Cf. C. Westermann, *The Promises to the Fathers* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980) 48-56.

¹⁸ D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 131; C. Westermann, *The Promises to the Fathers*, 51. G.W. Coats refers to the narrative opening as a “judgment oracle” (*Genesis*, 77).

that destruction was accomplished righteously, or judicially. The theological and “experiential” factor discussed in the previous chapter, whereby the description of God’s creating is recognized as a “deliverance” out of chaos, here comes into view: as the earth becomes a moral chaos so, in talionic justice, it will become a physical chaos in the deluge as creation is reversed.¹⁹ Thus God’s action, beginning with speech, is in both accounts a response to the dilemma of the earth:²⁰

	CREATION	DELUGE
DILEMMA	Gen 1.2 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹמֹת	Gen 6.11-12 וַתִּשְׁחָת הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס: בָּדָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וַהֲגָה נִשְׁחָתָה כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דְּרָכָו עַל־הָאָרֶץ:
DECLARATION	Gen 1.3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים	Gen 6.13 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים

The poetic justice of God’s response is also brought out by the use of the same root שחַת *shḥ* for both the sin (וַתִּשְׁחָת *wattiššāhēt*) and the judgment (מִשְׁחִיתָם *mašhîṭām*).²¹ Given the author’s control over his material, it is perhaps not insignificant that שחַת appears seven times in the narrative, and so along with its poetic use should be considered a key term.²² Interestingly, given our cultic approach, שחַת is used elsewhere to describe a defective animal or a disqualified priest,

¹⁹ Cf. W. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 54-59; N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 55; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 33; J.H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 75. R. Routledge (*Old Testament Theology: A Thematic Approach* [Downers Grove: IVP, 2008] 322) discusses the *Chaoskampf* motif as a link between creation and redemption: “Just as the flood demonstrates that judgment on sin may be depicted as a return to a state of chaos, God’s act of primordial redemption from chaos, reflected in the covenant with Noah, may be seen as the pattern for God’s redemptive dealings with his world. This includes the exodus and return from exile, and anticipates the last act of redemption: the final defeat of chaos and the creation of new heavens and a new earth” (see also fn 42 on the same page).

²⁰ B.W. Anderson picks up on some of the similarities when he writes: “The main action of the drama begins in 6.13-22, introduced by the declarative formula, ‘Then God said.’ God’s first address, in good priestly narrative style, is structured according to a two-fold announcement-command sequence....[and] concludes with the execution formula...” (“From Analysis to Synthesis: An Interpretation of Genesis 1-11,” *JBL* 97.1 [1978] 34).

²¹ Nearly all commentators recognize this (e.g., B. Jacob, *The First Book of the Bible: Genesis*, E.I. Jacob and W. Jacob, eds. and trans. [New York: KTAV, 1974] 49 [orig. *Das erste Buch der Tora* (1934)]; B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 135). Cf. also B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 33; D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 135.

²² Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Genesis בראשית* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1989) 51.

that is, those unfit for approaching the divine Presence (Lev 22.25; Mal 1.14; 2.8).²³ This makes for a fitting contrast with Noah who, as we will see, is described in terms of qualifying for entry to the divine abode. Furthermore, this “ruin” (וְהִשָּׁחָה) of the earth, resulting from *hāmās*, is said to come “before God” (לְפָנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים *lipnê hāʾlōhîm*) in 6.11, implying divine arbitration.²⁴

3. THE JUDICIAL CHARACTERIZATION OF THE OBJECTS OF THE *מַבּוּל*

Not only, however, are God and his actions depicted in judicial terms, but the objects of the *מַבּוּל*, those who undergo the waters of the deluge, are as well. Whichever way one translates the precise sin of the wicked, *hāmās* (Gen 6.11, 13) is no less than “the culpable breach of a legal ordinance,”²⁵ thus judged with the deluge of waters. Sarna defines it as “injustice, lawlessness, social unrighteousness,” bringing out the contrast between *hāmās* and justice/righteousness in Ezek 45.9 (“Put away *hāmās* and destruction, and do what is just and צְדָקָה”) and in Job 19.7 (“If I cry out concerning *hāmās* ...If I cry aloud there is no justice”).²⁶ The LXX brings out the contrast between “righteous” (δικαίος) Noah in Gen 6.9 and the “unrighteousness” of his generation in 6.11 by translating *hāmās* as ἀδικία. By making this distinction as the account opens, that is, *before* the waters of the *מַבּוּל* are unleashed, the results of the *מַבּוּל* in 7.23 are thus depicted, far from arbitrary, as judicial in nature:

וַיִּמָּח אֶת-כָּל-הַיְקוּם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה מֵאָדָם עַד-בְּהֵמָה עַד-רֶמֶשׂ וְעַד-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּמָח מִן-הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּשָּׂאֵר אַדְנָם וְאִשָּׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה׃

²³ A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in Exodus,” *AUSS* 24 (1986) 139; S.W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* (2005) 112.

²⁴ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 51.

²⁵ G. von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, revised (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 127. D. Clines states that the term “usually has religious overtones” (“The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 133). Our translation of “unrighteousness” is comparable to E.A. Speiser’s “lawlessness,” in agreement with Speiser’s opinion that “Heb. *hāmās* is a technical legal term which should not be automatically reproduced as ‘violence’; cf. 16.5” (*Genesis* [AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1964] 51). U. Cassuto also prefers “unrighteousness,” *hāmās* qualifying as anything that is not righteous (*Genesis* II, 52-53).

²⁶ N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 52 (w/ fn 45).

“Noah’s conduct,” thus, “exonerates him, and he survives the ordeal because he has not committed the ‘violence’ practiced by his generation.”²⁷ While the judgment appears collective, it is really, given Noah’s deliverance, exceedingly individual.²⁸ The utter destruction of the waters merely serves to underscore that “*only* Noah was left” (וַיִּשְׁאַר אֶת־נֹחַ wayiššā’er ’ak-nōah 7.23)—the righteous remnant.²⁹

4. THE JUDICIAL ROLE OF THE WATERS

Finally, considering the deluge as a water ordeal requires mention of perhaps the most obvious feature in the narrative, namely, that the waters serve as the means for distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. Water, to be sure, may even be called a principal participant in the drama.³⁰ The account is replete with terms descriptive of water: הַמַּבּוּל *hammabbûl* (which may itself denote “cosmic waters”),³¹ מַיִם *mayim*, מַטָּר *mātār*, רַבָּה מַעַיִן הַהוּם *ma’yēnōt t’hôm rabbâ*, אֲרֻבַּת הַשָּׁמַיִם *ʾrubbōt haššāmayim*, הַגֶּשֶׁם *haggešem*. More importantly, and in harmony with the

²⁷ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 358. For the relation of Noah’s righteousness to his finding grace (Gen 6.8), cf. A.N. Barnard, “Was Noah a Righteous Man?,” *Theology* 84 (1971) 311-14; W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah,” *VT* 21.3 (1971) 261-80. Presumably, the covenant of 6.18 has already been “cut,” so that Noah’s righteousness, as demonstrated by his obedience, ought to be seen within the context of a covenantal relationship with God, a relationship the basis of which is the favor of God.

²⁸ For any other individual, if found righteous, would have been spared. Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 52.

²⁹ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 380-81. Use of *šr* here, in its verbal form and in the context of surviving an eschatological judgment, is theological, of a piece with its nominal use in relation to the Exile (cf. 2 Ki 19.4; Isa 11.11, 16; 28.5; Jer 23.3; 31.7; 40.11; 50.20; Mic 2.12; 5.7-8; Zeph 3.13; Hag 1.12, 14; 2.2; Zech 8.6, 12-13; 9.8). See G.F. Hasel, *The Remnant: The History and Theology of the Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah*, 3rd ed. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1980).

³⁰ The term is Wenham’s (*Genesis 1-15*, 183).

³¹ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer* (AB 50; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971) 26. Contra B. Jacob who suggests it means “destruction,” thus needing the explanatory “of waters” (*Genesis*, 50). Cf. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 128; J. Begrich, “Mabbul. Eine exegetisch-lexikalische Studie,” *Zeitschrift für Semitistik und verwandte Gebiete* 6 (1928) 135-53. N.M. Sarna posits *mabbul* as technical term specifically for the upper part of the original cosmic ocean unleashed to fall upon the earth which joins the *tehom* from beneath to collapse creation (*Genesis*, 53; *Understanding Genesis*, 55). J.H. Walton, based on broader cultural usage, suggests the word may have broader currency as a “cosmic water-weapon wielded by deity” (*Genesis*, 313).

narrative of creation, God is the “water-controller,” or the “water warrior,”³² who controls “both rain and subterranean water.”³³ In order to destroy the wicked and deliver the just, he “must control the Flood, first unleashing it and then restraining it on schedule.”³⁴ In distinction from the Mesopotamian river ordeal where judgment in legal cases is the function of the (divine) River *Id*,³⁵ the waters of the deluge, battle language notwithstanding, are merely the instruments of God. God is thus the one who turns water from a force and symbol of death into one of life, who “sits enthroned over the deluge (לְמַבּוּל *lammabbûl*)” (Ps 29.10) exerting his sovereign power by means of the רוּחַ *rûah*.³⁶ The deluge of Noah is indeed the supreme example that the waters are completely under the command and control of YHWH, his “wind” being the instrument of execution, the ultimate expression of his power and authority, and the manifestation of his Presence.³⁷ It may even be posited that, as symbols, water signifies chaos while wind signifies the control that imposes order.³⁸ The waters that had conquered all creatures having the רוּחַ (6.17, 7.22) of life within are now themselves controlled by the God-sent רוּחַ (8.1; cf. Gen 1.2).

³² J.D. Pleins, *When the Great Abyss Opened: Classic and Contemporary Readings of Noah's Flood* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 122-23. Pleins notes the Bible's “obsession with God's power over the waters” (122), noting that the “flood story is yet another example of the power of Israel's God over unruly waters” (123). He further contextualizes the flood story within the ANE, positing that the combat stories of Babylon's Marduk, the Canaanite's Baal, and Israel's God “have as their special focus water” (123).

³³ D.T. Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005) 129. Cf. Tsumura's comparisons/contrasts with the extra biblical materials regarding the rain-giving god (Hadda in Eblaite, Adad or Addu in Akkadian, Baal, Hadad, or Haddu in Ugaritic, Teshub in Hurrian and Hittite) in his chapter 7 “God and the Waters,” 128-40; M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 602.

³⁴ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 122. Cf. also *HALOT*, 541 for the “celestial sea.”

³⁵ P. Kyle McCarter, “The River Ordeal in Israelite Literature,” *HTR* 66.4 (1973) 403-12. However, the Babylonian Marduk did claim to make the judgments of the river ordeal (cf. T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, vols. 1, 2 [unpublished PhD dissertation; Yale University, 1977] 428).

³⁶ As R. Luyster points out: “Yahweh's ability to contain and dominate the cosmic, the forces of chaos, is the absolute prerequisite and surest sign of his divine kingship. Normally, furthermore, his authority is expressed through the presence of his *rûah*, variously expressed as his breath, voice, or (as in the cases of Noah and Gen 1.2) wind” (“Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93 [1981] 2).

³⁷ R. Luyster, “Wind and Water,” 6, 8. Cf. N.M. Sarna (*Genesis*, 6) who suggests the possibility that even God's separating action in the Creation account of Gen 1 may have been understood as accomplished by his “Wind.” Cf. M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 609; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, A.W. Heathcote, P.J. Allcock, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1958) 121-27: The spirit is God's “instrument of revelation and action *par excellence*” (123).

³⁸ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 56.

It is precisely God's control of the waters, of course, that allows the deluge to constitute a judicial ordeal, that is, that allows the deluge to establish a legal truth: the judged are the wicked, the delivered are the righteous.³⁹

In the narrative, then, God is clearly depicted as righteous Judge, controlling the waters so as to destroy the wicked and to deliver the righteous (qualifying the latter, as will be noted below, to approach the holy mount). Interestingly, one significant reference to the deluge, the recently referenced Ps 29.10 ("YHWH sits enthroned over the *מבול*"), was interpreted this way in Jewish exegesis, with *יָשָׁב*, *yāšāḇ* taken as referring to a court session and God putting the deluge generation to trial by means of the *מבול*.⁴⁰

B. *The Deluge as Rebirth*

The deluge itself, notes Jacob, is only judgment "for the living creatures, but for the earth it is a bath of purification which washes away its pollution and restores its purity (Num 35.33ff)."⁴¹

³⁹ T.S. Frymer-Kensky (*The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 583) establishes the following points regarding judicial ordeals: they are (1) judicial in nature (establishing "legal truth"); (2) supernatural (justice being revealed by the deity); (3) universal (widespread throughout the ancient Near East).

⁴⁰ W.J. van Bekkum, "The Lesson of the Flood: *מבול* in Rabbinic Tradition," pp. 124-33 in *Interpretations of the Flood*, F.G. Martinez and G.P. Lutikhuizen, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 129. Cf. also J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 163-71. M. Kline offers a helpful summary: "The judicial procedure employed by the Lord was the divine ordeal. The rival claimants—God's people and their antichrist foes—were subjected to the ordeal of passage through the waters of death. We may incidentally note that Peter identifies the floodwaters as a baptismal event (1 Pet 3.20f), so advising us that the rite of baptism is a symbolic undergoing of a death ordeal. ...In such trials by ordeal the Lord renders a verdict in favor of those in the right by bringing them safely through the ordeal, while the condemnation of the false claimants is registered in their being overcome by the deadly ordeal medium. In the Deluge ordeal God provided Noah with the plans for the ark as the means of deliverance, secured his family in the ark, controlled the mounting waters, and brought the ark to rest on the far side of the flood. By their resurrection-emergence from the death waters (cf. 1 Pet 3.21) the remnant people were declared justified in the sight of God and the heirs of the heavenly kingdom." (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006] 86).

⁴¹ B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 60. So, too, K.A. Mathews speaks of the earth's "cleansing by waters" (*Genesis 1-11.26, 360*). A. Ross writes that "water was the natural way of purging and cleansing. The water would not only destroy wickedness, but it would wash the world clean so that it could begin afresh" (*Genesis* [CBC; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008] 73). Furthermore, in the NT "the Flood is clearly connected with the conceptions of judgment and baptism" (H.S. Benjamins, "Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian Theology: The Ship of the Church in the Making," pp 134-49 in *Interpretations of the Flood*, F.G. Martinez and G.P. Lutikhuizen, eds. [Leiden: Brill, 1999] 136).

This idea is in accord with the use of the word מָחָה *māḥâ* (Gen 6.7; 7.4; 7.23 x2), to “blot/wipe out by washing,” which is used for “the washing away of sins” (cf. Isa 43.25; 44.22; Jer 18.23; Ps 51.2, 9; Prov 6.33).⁴² McCarthy, furthermore, makes the important observation that the *Chaoskampf* motif is linked in the Old Testament to moral or social disorder, the waters not being opposed to the divine will but rather its passive instrument, so that the flood “is there to purify, not pollute.”⁴³ Thus the ultimate purpose of the deluge is to purify.⁴⁴ Even the period of rain, forty days and nights, is sometimes connected in the Bible with purification and the purging of sin, as it likely signifies in the present narrative.⁴⁵ The period may also represent the introduction of a new epoch in Scripture,⁴⁶ serving to transition from the old creation to the new. The water ordeal thus becomes for the righteous participant a “rite of passage,” a new birth that is a precondition for approaching the divine Presence at his holy mountain. Outside of ancient Israel, furthermore, the river ordeal, in as much as it “cleared” the innocent, was also seen as symbolizing purification and cleansing.⁴⁷

Utilizing my own basic outline of the narrative, we will offer a literary reading of the waters that manifests the theme of death and rebirth:⁴⁸

⁴² V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 275.

⁴³ D.J. McCarthy, “‘Creation’ Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry,” pp 74-89 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, B.W. Anderson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984) 76-77. This case, however, is not as easily made regarding the waters of the Creation account, and even for the Deluge needs to be nuanced by God’s use of the “wind” (8.1) to control the waters once He has unleashed them.

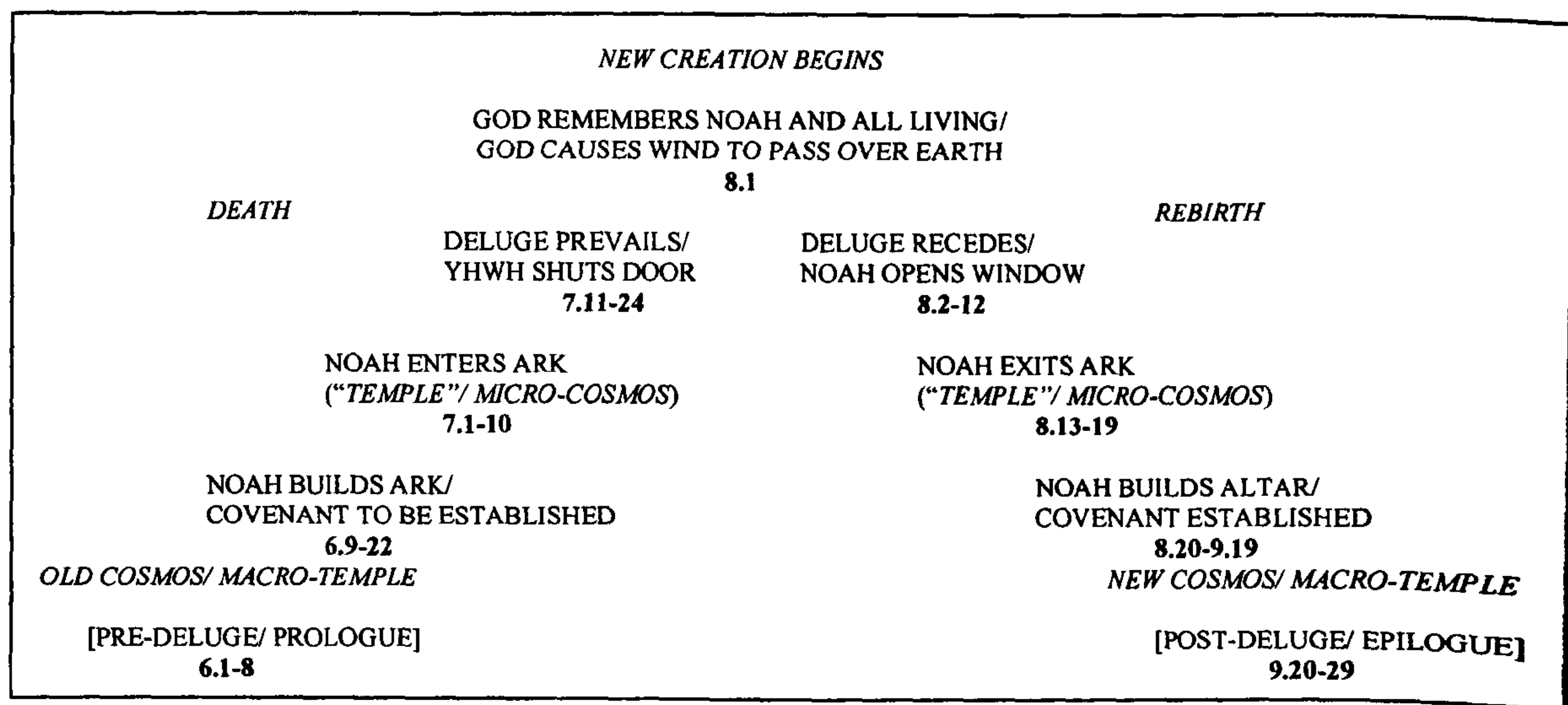
⁴⁴ D.J. McCarthy, S.J. “‘Creation’ Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry,” pp 74-89 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, B.W. Anderson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984; originally published in *CBQ* 29.3 [1967] 87-100) 77.

⁴⁵ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 54; *idem.*, *Exodus* (Jerusalem: JPS, 1991) 155. Cf. Gen 50.3; Num 13.25; 14.34; 1 Sam 17.16; Ezek 4.6; Jon 3.4.

⁴⁶ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 138. Cf. also his fn 58.

⁴⁷ See, e.g., the use of *tēbibtu* 1b, referring to “purification, cleansing, clearing,” in its relation to the river ordeal in the *Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 18: T. E. Reiner, ed.-in-charge (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 2006) 304; and the entry for *ḥuršānu* B in Vol. 6: H (A.L. Oppenheim, ed.-in-charge [1956] 255) whereby Marduk purifies a man in the river by clearing him through the ordeal.

⁴⁸ Cf. the chiasmic outlines of G.J. Wenham (“The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,” *VT* 28.3 [1978] 338) and B.W. Anderson (“From Analysis to Synthesis,” 38). The Mesopotamian flood narratives (Akkadian *Atrahasis*, *Gilgamesh*, and Sumerian versions) have also been interpreted as two-sided, with both a destructive and a creative aspect, of



1. UNLEASHING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: COSMIC DEATH

Broadly, the first half of the pericope, 6.9-7.24, marks a return to Gen 1.2a: the earth deluged in a state of *תְּהוֹ וָבְהוֹ* *tōhû wābōhû*. The deluge is thus an account of creation reversed, an anti-story against the creation story of Genesis 1,⁴⁹ starting with cosmos and ending with chaos. Whereas “Gen 1 climaxes in the creation of man, a climax marked precisely by the amplitude and number of words in its treatment, ...here the flood climaxes in the death of man placed at the peak of a crescendo of amplitude.”⁵⁰ Genesis 6.12, then, is laden with bitter irony, as it “echoes” the end of creation in Gen 1.31 from which the de-creation will begin:⁵¹

rebirth and recreation (cf. R.E. Simoons-Vermeer, “The Mesopotamian Floodstories: A Comparison and Interpretation,” *Numen* 21.1 [1974] 17-34). In as much as the deliverance entails a renewed cosmos, Clines’s motifs of “destruction and new creation” (D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 128-42). NOTE: Concepts of Cosmic Mountain ideology in the outline will be considered in section III of this chapter.

⁴⁹ E. van Wolde, “A Text-Semantic Study,” 23. Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis* (EBC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) 117; E. Noort, “The Stories of the Great Flood: Notes on Gen 6.5-9.17 in its Context of the Ancient Near East,” pp 1-38 in *Interpretations of the Flood*, F.G. Martinez and G.P. Luttikhuisen, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 7, 21-23, 35; N. Wyatt, *Space and Time in the Religious Life of the Near East* (BS 85; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 98.

⁵⁰ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 63.

⁵¹ G.J. Wenham, as others (e.g., U. Cassuto, C. Westermann), notes the same (*Genesis 1-15*, 171). Cf. also D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 133; J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 117; E. Noort, “Stories of the Great Flood,” 22; R.S. Hendel, “The Poetics of Myth in Genesis,” pp 157-70 in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth*, S.D. Breslauer, ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997) 163.

6.12

נִרְאָה

אֱלֹהִים

אֶת־הָאָרֶץ

וְהָנָה נִשְׁחָתָה כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דְּרָכָו עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

1.31

נִרְאָה

אֱלֹהִים

אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

וְהָנָה טוֹב מְאֹד

The verbs employed for man’s creation in Gen 1.26-27 (ברא / עשה), furthermore, are now transposed in Gen 6.7 (ברא / עשה) to symbolize its reversal.⁵² Indeed, the imagery of death begins here in the prologue with YHWH’s declared intent to “wipe out” (אָמְחָה *’emḥeh*) humanity (6.7), reinforced in the narrative proper by the declaration to Noah: “I am ready to *destroy them* (מִשְׁחִיתָם *mašḥîṭām*) with the earth” (6.13). The third הָנָה clause in the narrative (6.17) then directs attention to the means by which the destruction will come: הַמַּבּוּל מֵיִם. Interestingly, the three הָנָה clauses in the first half of the narrative⁵³ establish the dilemma, the divine response of talionic judgment, and the deluge as the means:

Investigative report:	6.12: וְהָנָה נִשְׁחָתָה כִּי־הִשְׁחִית כָּל־בָּשָׂר אֶת־דְּרָכָו עַל־הָאָרֶץ
Declarative judgment	6.13: וְהִנְנִי מִשְׁחִיתָם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
Judicial action	6.17: (וְאָנֹכִי) הִנְנִי מְבִיא אֶת־הַמַּבּוּל מֵיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ

Immediately, then, in 6.17 the waters become a symbol of death: “the deluge of waters” is, given the *lamed* of purpose, “to destroy” (לְשַׁחֵת *l’sḥēṭ*) so that all flesh upon the earth “will perish” (יִגְוָע *yigwā’*). Thus as the waters rise, death itself rises in conquest. While creation in Gen 1 was marked by the control of waters, so now the presence of unrestrained waters signals a return to non-creation.⁵⁴ Indeed, both accounts, the creation and deluge, are narrated from the perspective of water:

In the P account of Genesis 1, the reader is introduced to a world in which watery chaos rules supreme until God’s intervention brings order.... The flood account in Gen 6-8 tells the story of how, when the world was corrupted, God withdrew the restraints placed on the waters at the time of creation, and they flooded the world once more from the “great deep” (תְּהוֹם רַבָּה) and the “windows of heaven” (אֲרָבַת הַשָּׁמַיִם). ...Thus, the

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N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 49.

53

These are matched, as we will see, in the second half of the narrative by three more (8.11, 13, 9.9). The *hinnē* “acts like a camera shutter to freeze the ‘sight’ which is seen. ...It is also used in narrative contexts in Genesis to introduce a change of scene in which a new character appears” (W.M. Clark, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 268-69).

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D. Rudman, “The Use of Water Imagery in Descriptions of Sheol,” *ZAW* 113 (2001) 240-44 (243). He notes how the absence of the sea marks creation (cf. Rev 21.1).

chaos waters by their very nature are symbolic of the *absence* of order and creation. In the flood narrative, they denote the *reversal* of creation.⁵⁵

After a brief forecasting declaration in 7.4 (“I will cause it to rain [מִמְטֵיר *mamṭîr*] upon the earth”), bitterly recalling Gen 2.5, the deluge comes in 7.6: וַהֲמַבּוּל הָיָה מַיִם עַל-הָאָרֶץ. A parallel statement is then given in 7.10: וַיִּמַּי הַמַּבּוּל הָיָה עַל-הָאָרֶץ, the next verse expanding its description, and thus defining הַמַּבּוּל,⁵⁶ with what some believe is a verse from an antecedent epic:⁵⁷

All the fountains of the great deep were burst asunder,
נִבְקְעוּ כָּל-מַעְיֵנֹת תְּהוֹם רָבָה
And the windows of heaven were opened.
וַאֲרָבַת הַשָּׁמַיִם נִפְתְּחוּ

Thus, the deluge of waters is the phenomenon whereby the waters flooded upon the earth both from the deep beneath and from the dome above.⁵⁸ Here it is tempting to understand with Sarna הַמַּבּוּל as the cosmic waters above the dome which now reunite with the תְּהוֹם *t’hôm* from beneath to collapse the cosmos.⁵⁹ The deluge then constitutes the reversal of the second day of creation’s separation of waters in Gen 1.7:

נִעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַקִּיץ נִבְרַל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרִקִּיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרִקִּיעַ וַיְהִי-כֵן:

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 243, 244. Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 134-35.

⁵⁶ The same point might be made from the parallel of 7.6 with 7.11, whereby the “floodwaters” (v 6) are defined as “the fountains of the great deep...,” etc., (v 11).

⁵⁷ Gen 7.11 displays poetic meter, rhythm, and paronomasia. Cf. H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (7th ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) 144; U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 84-88; V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 292-93; J.S. Kselman, “A Note on Gen 7.11,” *CBQ* 35 (1973) 493; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 181; P.H. Seely, “The Firmament and the Water Above, Part II: The Meaning of ‘The Water above the Firmament’ in Gen 1.6-8,” *WTJ* 54 (1992) 34; N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 49; *ibid.*, *Understanding Genesis*, 43. The verse stresses God’s active role in the Deluge as well as cosmic dependence upon God’s sustaining power: “No language could portray more powerfully the contingent character of the creation. The cosmos is not eternal and self-perpetuating, as Greek philosophers maintained; it is sustained in being by the Creator. Were God to relax his upholding power, everything would lapse into chaos” (B.W. Anderson, “Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith,” 90).

⁵⁸ Cf. L. Jacobs, “Jewish Cosmology,” pp 66-86 in *Ancient Cosmologies*, C. Blacker and M. Loewe, eds. (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 70; U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 87-88.

⁵⁹ N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 55.

The *מַבְבּוּל* undoes the *יַבְדֵּל* *yabdēl*. The separation of waters being, perhaps, the primary act of creation, the (re)unification of those waters becomes the primary means of destruction.⁶⁰ For this idea, von Rad's comments are worth quoting in full:

Mabbûl does not mean "flood," "inundation," or even "destruction," but it is a technical term for a part of the world structure, namely, the heavenly ocean. This heavenly sea, which is above the firmament (*rāqîa'*), empties downward through latticed windows (2 Kings 7.2, 19). Here we have the same realistic and cosmological ideas as in Gen, ch. 1. According to the Priestly representation we must understand the Flood, therefore, as a catastrophe involving the entire cosmos. When the heavenly ocean breaks forth upon the earth below, and the primeval sea beneath the earth, which is restrained by God, now freed from its bonds, gushes up through yawning chasms onto the earth, then there is a destruction of the entire cosmic system according to biblical cosmogony. The two halves of the chaotic primeval sea, separated—one up, the other below—by God's creative government (1.7-9), are again united; creation begins to sink again into chaos. Here the catastrophe, therefore, concerns not only men and beasts as in the Yahwistic account but the earth (6.13; 9.11)—indeed, the entire cosmos.⁶¹

The great summary merism of the cosmos in Gen 1.1, "the heavens and the earth," is destroyed by a merism of destruction—the unleashing of the waters above and the deep beneath. And just as the separation of the second day leads to the gathering of waters on the third day so that the dry land appears, so now the waters un-gather so that the land disappears (7.17-20). The structure, meaning, and sound combine to mirror the swelling, surging waters.⁶² From 7.17:

וַיִּרְבּוּ הַמַּיִם wayyirbû hammayim and v 18: *וַיִּגְבְּרוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּרְבּוּ קֵאֵר wayyigb'ru hammayim wayyirbû m'ēōd*, to the summary statement of v 19: *וְהַמַּיִם גָּבְרוּ קֵאֵר קֵאֵר w'hammayim gāb'ru m'ēōd m'ēōd*, with its heaping up of adverbs, the idea "waters" itself seems to multiply and swell. In the forty-seven Hebrew words of vv 17-20, tautology is utilized to portray the grim watery destruction:

"waters" (5x), "multiplied" (2x), "conquered" (3x), "greatly" (3x).⁶³ The deluge drama "is heard in the sound of the words, a sound which swells toward the climax, and becomes muffled and

⁶⁰ Cf. E. Noort, "Stories of the Great Flood," 22; B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 139; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 59, 376; R.W.L. Moberly, "Why Did Noah Send Out a Raven?," *VT* 50.3 (2000) 351-52; N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 55.

⁶¹ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 128. Westermann seems to miss this point when he says that "in P the whole earth is not destroyed" and that nothing is said about a "new creation of the earth" (*Genesis 1-11*, 417). Cf. D. Clines, "The Theology of the Flood Narrative," 135-37; E. van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study," 23.

⁶² G.J. Wenham, e.g., notes the alliteration of *m*'s and *b*'s (*Genesis 1-15*, 182).

⁶³ Cf. F. Delitzsch, *A New Commentary on Genesis*, S. Taylor, trans. (1888; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1978) 269; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 379.

heavy toward repose.”⁶⁴ B.W. Anderson notes the “swelling of the waters is vividly portrayed by the repeated use of the key words ‘the waters prevailed’ to create an ascending affect”:⁶⁵

wayyigb’rû hammayim (v 18)
w’hammayim gāb’rû (v 19)
gāb’rû hammāyim (v 20)

The increase of the waters is also mimicked by the ascending number of words in the cola: vv 18-19 have 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 words, v 20 has 8 words in one colon, v 21 peaking with 16 words.⁶⁶

Continuing the irony, while in the creation narrative life was to “multiply” (וַיִּרְבֵּי) and fill the earth (1.28), here it is death that is multiplying (וַיִּרְבֵּי), flooding the earth (7.17)—indeed, v 18, the waters of death are multiplying *greatly* (וַיִּרְבֵּי קָאָר). This is the justice upon a generation that had “filled” the earth with “great” wickedness (6.1-5, 11-12).⁶⁷ The conquering of the waters is expressed by the key word גִּבּוֹר *gibbôr*, portraying triumph in battle, likening the chaotic waters to “hostile warriors attacking and undoing God’s creation.”⁶⁸ The upward movement is

⁶⁴ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 36.

⁶⁵ B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 35.

⁶⁶ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 35.

⁶⁷ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 379-80.

⁶⁸ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 140. R. Luyster speaks of “rebellious” waters that conquer, albeit only with Yahweh’s “consent” (“Wind and Water,” 2, 4). This supports the reading that the sign of God’s promise nevermore to send a Deluge of waters is meant to be seen as a hanging up or discarding of the Warrior’s battle weapon (first suggested, at least in modern times, by J. Wellhausen, *Geschichte Israels* [Berlin: Druck und Verlag von G. Reimer, 1878] 352), similar to Marduk’s bow in the *Enuma Elish* (cf. S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* [Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1991] 263). “Always, the word *qeshet* designates a weapon of war” (N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 58). Cf. B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 88, 100; M. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006) 152; G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 134; G. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U, 1973) 44-48. NB: Use of the term *t’hôm* in 7.11 also contributes to the hostile perception of the waters (cf. B. Vawter, “A Note On ‘The Waters Beneath The Earth’” *CBQ* 22.1 [1960] 72). Alternatively, the bent bow, rather than being “hung up,” may be taken as threatening the firmament—that is, against the *mabbul* as understood to be the waters above (*Wasserschlauchlager*, cf. J. Begrich, “Mabbul,” 134-53) versus the *tehom* waters beneath. While not utilizing this line of reasoning, P.A.H. de Boer (“Quelques remarques sur l’Arc dans la Nuée (Genèse 9, 8-17),” p 105-14 in *Questions disputées d’Ancien Testament*, C. Brekelmans, ed. [Louvain: Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium, 1974]) and C.J.L. Kloos (“The Flood on Speaking Terms with God,” *ZAW* 94.4 [1982] 639-42) both argue for the *mabbul* as the enemy subdued by Elohim, with the bow being a sign primarily for the *mabbul* to remember the covenant between God and all flesh. This position, however, is not without difficulties. See L.A. Turner, “The Rainbow as the Sign of the Covenant in Genesis IX 11-13,” *VT* 43.1 (1993) 119-24. For other holy war imagery in the Deluge narrative, cf. G. von Rad,

underscored at the outset in v 17 by the movement of the ark—being “lifted” (וַיִּשָּׂא *wayyis’û*), it “rose” (וַתָּרָם *wattārām*). The covering (וַיִּכְסֵּה *way’kussû*) of the earth is stressed by repetition in vv 19 and 20. While v 19 has it that the “highest mountains” were covered, with v 20 merely mentioning “the mountains,” yet escalation nonetheless comes across through the change of perspective, followed by the subsequent change in particles: the waters thus rise, so to speak, from “the highest mountains *under* (תַּחַת *tahat*) the heavens” in v 19 to being “fifteen cubits *above* (מֵלְמַעְלָה *milma’lâ*) those mountains” in v 20.⁶⁹ The conquest of the waters may also be seen by tracing the *athnaks* of the unit (7.17-24):⁷⁰

- v 17 - וַיִּשָּׂא 40 days
- v 18 - וַיִּשָּׂא “the ark”/ “the waters conquered”
- v 19 - וַיִּכְסֵּה “the waters conquered”
- v 20 - וַיִּכְסֵּה “the waters conquered”
- v 21 - וַיָּמָו “all flesh died”
- v 22 “all...died”
- v 23 - וַיִּשָּׂא “the ark”/ “they were destroyed”
- v 24 - וַיִּשָּׂא 150 days

With the disappearance of the land, the third day of creation has been undone. Just as the third day’s emergence of land (out of the second day’s separation of waters) was toward the sixth day’s parallel panel of the creation of humanity and animals, so now the unification of the waters and the covering of the land is toward the destruction of humanity and animals—7.21: “All flesh that moved upon the earth *perished* (וַיָּגָע),” the description of living creatures that follows

Holy War in Ancient Israel, M.J. Dawn, ed. and trans. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991); S.D. Mason, “Another Flood? Genesis 9 and Isaiah’s Broken Eternal Covenant,” *JSOT* 32.2 (2007) 186-91.

⁶⁹ Cf. the first mention of the Deluge in 6.17 which was to destroy all flesh “under heaven” that is “upon the earth.”

⁷⁰ The disjunctive *athnak* “may be exegetically important [for] marking the emphasis of the verse,” according to R.T. Fuller and K. Choi, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006) 27 fn 8. Cf. also James D. Price, “Exegesis and Pausal Forms with Non-Pausal Accents in the Hebrew Bible” (Paper presented at the Southeastern Regional Meeting of ETS March 18, 2006, available at: www.jamesdprice.com/images/Pausal_Forms_ETTS_paper.pdf); *Idem.*, *The Syntax of Masoretic Accents in the Hebrew Bible* (Edwin Mellen Press, 1990) 18. In addition to the bookends of dating, v 24 weaves in the common phrase of destruction from the first half of the unit, “the waters conquered,” while v 17 weaves in salvation, “the Ark,” before that destruction.

corresponding to their order of creation (—excepting the sea creatures which were not destroyed), from birds to animals to creepers to “all mankind.” Verse 22 repeats the conclusion emphasizing the utter destruction strikingly by fronting the verb “they died” to the end position with a double-claused subject:

כָּל אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמַת־רוּחַ חַיִּים בָּאֶפְיוֹ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחַרָהּ מָתוּ

The verb *mētū*, being stative, marks this climax as an object of contemplation.⁷¹ “‘Perished’ and ‘wiped out’ (vv 21, 23) occur earlier in the flood narrative (e.g., 6.7, 17), but ‘died’ is new to the story and only occurs here (cf. 9.29). This deliberate reflection of the garden scene (2.17, 3.3-4), where human death is threatened, and the genealogy of Seth (5.5 etc.), where death reigns, brings forward to culmination the forceful response unmitigated sin requires.”⁷² As Clines so poignantly put it: “The very constitution of man falls apart: at the first, the body plus breath made a living man, but now that last union is broken, and creation is undone.”⁷³ Verse 23 then provides a summary conclusion to the denouement of the drama as had been outlined by the clauses: “So He *wiped out* (וַיִּמַחַ wayyimah) all living things that were upon the face of the ground,” the order of v 21 now reversed: “from man to animals to creepers to the birds.”⁷⁴ The divine declaration of the “end” (קֵץ *qēs*) in 6.13 is thus resolved with the final statement of 7.24: creation has unraveled back to chaos—back to Gen 1.2:⁷⁵

⁷¹ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 34.

⁷² K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 381.

⁷³ D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 138.

⁷⁴ While “creepers” does not fit the reversal neatly, the penchant for keeping the narrative from being too clean appears to be part of the author’s style. Indeed, this may be considered the “biblical” style in general. Cf. W. Baumgartner, “Ein Kapitel vom hebräischen Erzählungsstil,” in *Eucharisterion: Festschrift für H. Gunkel* FRLANT 19 (1923) 145-57 (esp. 151-52, 157).

⁷⁵ U. Cassuto describes the scene similarly: “as though the world had reverted to its primeval state at the dawn of Creation, when the waters of the deep submerged everything” (*Genesis* II, 97). Cf. B. Vawter, “A Note on ‘The Waters Beneath the Earth,’” 73; R.W.L. Moberly “Why Did Noah Send Out a Raven?,” 351-52; *ibid.*, *Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009) 31; V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 291.

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֵהוֹ וְנָהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם.

“The world in which order first arose out of a primeval watery chaos is now reduced to the watery chaos out of which it arose—chaos-come-again.”⁷⁶

2. ESCAPING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: BURIAL WITHIN THE ARK

While the macro-cosmos is buried in the cosmic waters,⁷⁷ the ark, serving as a micro-cosmos (as will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter), may also be seen to constitute a metaphoric burial of all the living creatures within. Several literary features of the narrative point in this direction. The first is simply that the placement of the characters within the ark occurs amidst the very imagery of death already conveyed. In theological language, and as considered a “baptism” in the New Testament (1 Peter 3.20-21), the subjects within the ark are dying to the old creation in preparation for the new. Secondly, the idea of burial is supported in the broader sense of being “hidden out of sight.”⁷⁸ To escape the burial of the world in the deluge, Noah and his household, and all the creatures with him, must “enter” (כָּבַד) and be “shut in” (וַיִּסְגֹּר בַּעֲדָיו) 7.16) the ark. Perhaps a bit speculatively, R.W.L. Moberly points out that humans and animals appear to live in darkness within the ark.⁷⁹ Thirdly, the significant term

⁷⁶ J. Blenkinsopp, “Genesis 1-11,” pp 1-64 in *The Pentateuch*, J. Blenkinsopp and J. Challenor (Chicago: ACTA, 1971) 46-47.

⁷⁷ For the relation of these waters to *Sheol*, cf. B. Vawter, “A Note On ‘The Waters Beneath The Earth,’” 71; R. Luyster, “Wind and Water,” 6-7; H.G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *Mayim Rabbim*, ‘Many Waters,’” *JBL* 74.1 (1955) 9-21 (esp. 16-17, 21); R. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated: A Reassessment of the Theme of “Chaos” in the Hebrew Bible* (BZAW; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005) 88-93; D. Rudman, “The Use of Water Imagery in Descriptions of *Sheol*.” Rudman posits that “depictions of the individual swallowed up by the primeval chaos waters (cf. Gen 1.2) denote the passing of that individual from the realm of creation (life, the earth), to that of noncreation (death, *Sheol*)” (244). Cf. also N.J. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969) 21-23, 59-66; P.S. Johnson, *Shades of Sheol: Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2002) 114-24.

⁷⁸ In Gen 23.3, 8 Abraham twice declares his longing to “bury my dead out of my sight.” In Josh 2.6, when Rahab hides the pair of spies from (the sight of) the king’s men, a metaphoric death-burial seems to be portrayed –bolstered by covering them with flax, from which burial linen was made. Incidentally, even the English “ark,” from the Latin *arca*, from the verb *arcere*, designates a covered receptacle. Cf. V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 280 fn 3.

⁷⁹ R.W.L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 29.

“ark” is most probably an Egyptian loanword from either *Tbt*, with reference to a chest, casket, coffin, or *db’t*, meaning shrine, sarcophagus.⁸⁰ Finally, it is perhaps not irrelevant here to note that understanding the ark as a burial has been a typical reading throughout the history of the church.⁸¹ Waltke takes a similar reading: “The elect covenant family going through the sea of death and coming forth from their burial chamber (Isa 26.19-21) is a pledge that the redeemed will be brought through the cataclysm of the final judgment.”⁸² Broadly, then, the idea of burial fits precisely within the context of death and rebirth—to which rebirth we now turn.

3. CONTROLLING THE PRIMORDIAL WATERS: THE REBIRTH OF THE COSMOS

Whereas the “first part of the story represents a movement toward chaos,” the “second part represents a movement toward the new creation, with Noah and his sons as the representatives of the new humankind who were to inherit the earth.”⁸³ And even as the רוּחַ *rûah* forms the contrasting element (as we have argued it in the previous chapter) that marks the beginning of creation in Gen 1.2c: וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם, so in 8.1b the new creation begins with the control of water by means of the רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים רֹחֵץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיִּשְׁכּוּ הַמָּיִם: רוּחַ.⁸⁴ The רוּחַ-wind is the

⁸⁰ BDB, 1061; HALOT, IV: 1678; J.D. Douglas, ed., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, Part One (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1980) 110.

⁸¹ Justin, in a sermon on Psalm 6, proclaimed that Christ “stayed in the tomb as Noah stayed in the ark” (J. Danielou, *From Shadows to Reality: Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, D.W. Hibberd, trans. [London: Burns and Oates, 1960] 96), and John Calvin, for another example, stated: “How great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life shone forth, does not yet move a foot out of his sepulcher, without the command of God” (J. Calvin, *Genesis*, J. King, trans. and ed. [Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975] 280).

⁸² B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 152. Interestingly, here, Gen 7.16 and Isa 26.20 both reference safety from judgment via a shut door (סָגַר).

⁸³ B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 38. So, too, J.H. Walton: “[I]t is important to note that theologically this is being presented as a re-creation” (*Genesis*, 331); G.W. Coats (*Genesis: With An Introduction to Narrative Literature* [FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983] 74) also outlines 8.1-9.17 broadly as “Re-creation”; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 33.

⁸⁴ So, too, B.W. Anderson: “The statement, ‘God caused a wind to blow over the earth,’ which recalls the ‘wind from God’ (*rûah ’lôhîm*) of Gen 1.2, introduces by way of contrast the theme of the new creation which becomes explicit in 9.1-17 where the imago Dei reappears” (“From Analysis to Synthesis,” 36). Cf. also M. Kline: “The Flood narrative itself invites a comparison of God’s action by means of the wind (*rûah*, Gen 8.1) upon the flood waters (which recall the primal creation conditions) to the hovering of the Spirit (*rûah*) over the deep at the

primary means of God to accomplish his mighty acts (Ex 10.13, 19; Num 11.31; Josh 10.11; Pss 18.7-19; 148.8), being the One who “rides on the wings of the wind” and makes them “his messengers” (Ps 104.3-4), but this is especially so in his role as “water-controller” (cf. Gen 1.2; 8.1; Ex 14.21; 15.10).⁸⁵ The following panel, based on insights from Matthews, who notes the echoes of Gen 1 serve to portray a new creation,⁸⁶ outlines parallels between the creation and re-creation weeks. Both Matthews and Waltke (who builds on Matthews) leave out the seventh day parallel which I have formulated and here include, believing the “rest” of God, entered into by worship,⁸⁷ to be an interpretative crux for both pericopes. In fact, Gen 2.2-3 and 8.22 are the only two places in Genesis where a form of שבת *šb̄t* occurs.⁸⁸ Thus in both accounts, creation and deluge, “the theological narrative moves from a display of divine work to the account of divine rest.”⁸⁹

beginning (Gen 1.2)” (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 85); S.E. McEvenue (*Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 64): 8.1b “evokes Gen 1.2”; K.A. Matthews (*Genesis 1-11.26*, 384): “the wind is the renewed work of the Creator”; R.W.L. Moberly (“Why Did Noah Send Out a Raven?”, 352-53), who also notes similarities between *rûah* of Gen 1.2 and 8.1 likely include bird imagery, states: “The *rûah* in both 1.2 and 8.1 represents the presence and creative power of God transforming a watery waste into a habitable world”; B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 86-87; U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 101; H.G. May, “Pattern and Myth in the Old Testament,” *Journal of Religion* 21.3 (1941) 285-99 (296); M. DeRoche, “The *Ruah Elohim* in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?”, pp 303-18 in *Ascribe to the LORD: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, L. Eslinger, G. Taylor, eds. (JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988). However, a distinguishing feature of Israelite religion is that Yahweh is never a manifestation of any part of nature, being completely transcendent. Cf. L. Claham, “Mythopoeic Antecedents of the Biblical World-View and Their Transformation in Early Israelite Thought,” pp 108-19 in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, P.D. Miller Jr., eds. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 116.

⁸⁵ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 384-85.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 383. Cf. also B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 128-29. Waltke also notes, based on Wenham’s dating (*Genesis 1-15*, 100), that “the acts of re-creation occur on Sunday and Wednesday, the days that began the two triads in the first creation week” (130).

⁸⁷ This may explain why many of the sixth day features of Creation, features that are the basis of Sabbath worship (created in God’s image, etc.) resurface at the “Sabbath” section of the Re-creation account (8.20ff).

⁸⁸ U. Cassuto has also noted this insight as establishing a parallel to the story of Creation (*Genesis II*, 123).

⁸⁹ W. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 10.

	CREATION: GEN 1		RE-CREATION: GEN 8-9 ⁹⁰	
FIRST DAY	1.2	“earth,” deep,” “Spirit” (<i>rûah</i>), “waters”	8.1b-2a	“wind” (<i>rûah</i>), “earth,” “waters,” “deep”
SECOND DAY	1.7-8	“waters,” “sky”	8.2b	“sky”
THIRD DAY	1.9	“water,” “dry ground,” “appear”	8.3-5	“water,” “tops of the mountains,” “appear”
FOURTH DAY	1.14-19	Creation of luminaries	8.13	Creation of luminaries unnecessary (unveiling of luminaries?) ⁹¹
FIFTH DAY	1.20	“birds,” “above the earth,” “across (<i>‘al-p’nê</i>) the surface of the expanse”	8.7-8	“raven,” “from the earth,” “from the surface (<i>‘al-p’nê</i>) of the ground”
SIXTH DAY	1.24	“creatures,” “livestock,” “creatures that move along the ground,” “wild animals”	8.17	“creature,” “birds,” “animals,” “creatures that move along the ground”
	1.26	“man,” “image”	9.6	“image,” “man”
	1.28	“blessed,” “be fruitful,” “increase in number,” “fill the earth,” “rule...every living creature”	9.1-2	“blessed,” “be fruitful,” “increase in number,” “fill the earth,” “fear...of you...upon every creature”
SEVENTH DAY	2.1-3	“God rested (<i>yîšbōt</i>),” “He rested” (<i>šāḇat</i>), “God blessed” (<i>way’ḥārek</i>)	8.21-9.2	“YHWH breathed the restful breath” (<i>hannîḥōah</i>), “shall not rest off (<i>yîšbōtû</i>),” “God blessed” (<i>way’ḥārek</i>)

Just as the coming of the deluge in 7.10 is explicitly described in 7.11 as the bursting asunder of the great deep and the opening of the windows of heaven, so now the abating of the waters in 8.1 is described in like fashion in 8.2:

The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were dammed up
וַיִּסְקְרוּ מַעְיֵנֹת תְּהוֹם וַאֲרָבַת הַשָּׁמַיִם
and the rain from heaven was stayed.
וַיִּכְלֹא הַנֶּשֶׁם מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם

The separation of the waters and making of the dome from the second day of creation being unnecessary acts for this re-creation (because of their continuing validity), the stopping up of the fountains beneath and the windows above becomes the intentional parallel—that is, an act that causes a parting of the waters. The creation parallel, as well as the chiastic reversal of the destruction of the deluge, continues into the third day as the waters return to their gathering, and

⁹⁰ Lasting more than a week, Gen 8-9 does not, to be sure, match day per day with Gen 1 although the general flow of the Creation order, as can be seen, is parallel.
⁹¹ This possibility, the unveiling of the luminaries as Noah removes the Ark’s cover (with the Ark being a mini cosmos), is suggested by Kline (*Kingdom Prologue*, 139). A major objection to this suggestion is that the text itself, utilizing a *hinnê* clause, forces the readers “eyes” to regard the *dry ground* not the heavens above.

the land (i.e., the tops of the mountains) is seen (8.5).⁹² The emergence of dry land (8.13-14) is given threefold emphasis: first, by its taking place on New Year's Day (8.13a; *1.1.601 Wednesday*—that is, the 601st anniversary of Noah's birth);⁹³ secondly, by the narrative art of Noah's own sight of it (8.13b); and, thirdly, by objective statement (8.14).⁹⁴ This second half of the deluge narrative also contains three *הנה* clauses:

New life	8.11: וְהָנָה עַל־הָאֲדָמָה שָׁרָף בְּפִיהָ נִידַע נֹחַ כִּי־קָלַי הַמַּיִם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ
Dry land	8.13: וְהָנָה תִּרְבִּי פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה
Covenant	9.9: (וְאָנִי) הִנֵּנִי מְקִיִּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זַרְעְכֶם אִתְּרִיכֶם

In 8.11, emphasis is given to the new vegetative life, particularly from an olive tree. B. Jacob is probably right in viewing this olive leaf as a sign that the earth had been purified and consecrated.⁹⁵ The next *הנה* clause, in 8.13, directs the mind's eye to the dry land. Upon this dry land, then, the “creation” of living creatures takes place, vv 15-19 emphasizing their “coming out” from the ark by a four-fold use of *יצא* *yatsa*, a word that may be considered a “creation term.”⁹⁶ Here the previous chapter's point about the use of *יצא* in creation (Gen 1.12, 24) is worth rehearsing, namely that *יצא* may be suggestive of birthing, being sometimes utilized “of children as going forth from loins” and “also of birth” both within the Pentateuch (cf. Gen 35.11; 46.26; Ex 1.5; 21.22; Num 12.12; Deut 28.57) and in the rest of the Hebrew canon (cf. 2S 7.12;

⁹² Kline agrees: “The way the literary form of the Flood narrative in Gen 6-8 reflects the style and structure of the creation account in the Genesis prologue is calculated to identify the Flood episode as a (re-)creation event. To similar effect is the way the physical phenomena of the flood recapitulate the course of the original creation from the stage of the unbounded deep to the (re)appearance of dry land and vegetation and the (re)emergence of animals and man” (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 88). Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 444; U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 106.
⁹³ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 180. Gen 8.5 presents the first of three Wednesdays, the other two being the drying up of the waters (8.13) and the disembarkation from the Ark (8.14).
⁹⁴ B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 36. An *inclusio* is formed in vv 7 and 14 by the repetition of “dried out” (*יבשה* // *יבשה*); “dried up” (*תִּרְבִּי*), twice repeated, is sandwiched in between in v 13 (K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 384). Cf. also G. Larsson, “Chronological Parallels between the Creation and the Flood,” *VT* 27.4 (1977) 490-92. Larsson demonstrates how the dates in the Flood story link together the old Creation with the new.
⁹⁵ “And lo what a happy sight! The earth is green and reconsecrated, because oil is a sign of consecration” (B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 58). N.M. Sarna suggests the olive leaf is also a sign of regeneration (*Genesis*, 58).
⁹⁶ Cf. S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 58-59.

16.11; 1K 8.19=2Ch 6.9; Jer 1.5; 20.18; Job 3.11; 38.8).⁹⁷ Gen 1.24’s use of אֲחַיִּים in particular, where the idea of animals springing forth from the earth in “a creative participation of the maternal earth,”⁹⁸ seems especially suggestive. In the deluge narrative, however, the ark has replaced the earth—reasons for this being suggested in the next section—so that “all living creatures” (9.10) are defined as “all that came out of the ark.”⁹⁹ The following is a panel outline of 8.16-19:¹⁰⁰

A	¹⁶ <i>Go out (אֲחַיִּים) from the ark,</i>	A'	¹⁸ <i>So Noah went out (אֲחַיִּים),</i>
B	<i>you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.</i>	B'	<i>and his sons and his wife and his son's wives with him.</i>
C	¹⁷ <i>All living creatures that are with you, from all flesh: of birds and of all animals and of all creepers that creep upon the earth,</i>	C'	¹⁹ <i>All living creatures, all creepers, all birds, whatever creeps upon the earth, according to their families,</i>
D	<i>bring them out (אֲחַיִּים) with you</i>	D'	<i>they went out (אֲחַיִּים) from the ark</i>
E	<i>so they may swarm in the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.</i>		

Along with the repeated use of אֲחַיִּים,¹⁰¹ the E-element, by its exceptionality, serves to emphasize procreative life. Instead of death multiplying by the waters of the deluge, life will multiply. Noah, as a new Adam, is given, along with his sons, the same blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply” (9.1). God’s rest and blessing after creation (2.1-3; 1.28-30) is paralleled by God’s

⁹⁷ BDB, 423.
⁹⁸ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 57.
⁹⁹ Cf. S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 73.
¹⁰⁰ Like my panel outline for exiting the Ark (independently confirmed by McEvenue’s study [*Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 66] who considers 8.16-19 “a most ritual exit, in the most structured and symmetrical unit of the pericope”), Wenham (*Genesis 1-15*, 177) posits one for entering the Ark, 7.6-16:

Date in Noah’s life	6a	10a (11a)
Flood comes	6b	10b, 11b-12
Noah and family enter	7	13
Animals enter	8	14
In pairs	9a	15-16a
“As God commanded”	9b	16b

¹⁰¹ R.E. Longacre notes the delineated participants are subservient to verbal theme of “going out” (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 255).

rest and covenant (8.21-9.17),¹⁰² along with the promise that sustaining creation will not “rest off” (יִשְׁבֹּתוּ; *yišbōtû*; 8.22)—a promise that functions as a new creation theme.¹⁰³ The covenantal promise to stay the floodwaters is where the third הִנֵּה clause appears—remarkably parallel to the third הִנֵּה clause of the first half of the narrative as its antipode:

Deluge	6.17:	(וַאֲנִי) הִנֵּנִי מֵבִיא אֶת-הַמָּבּוּל מִיָּם עַל-הָאָרֶץ
No more Deluge	9.9-11:	(וַאֲנִי) הִנֵּנִי מִקִּים אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת-זֶרְעְכֶם אִתְּרִיכֶם ... וְלֹא-יִכָּרֵת קָל-בְּשָׁר עוֹד מִמֶּי הַמָּבּוּל וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה עוֹד מָבּוּל לְשַׁחַת הָאָרֶץ

In Wenham’s scene analysis these clauses are set in chiasmic parallel as “divine monologues,”¹⁰⁴ fittingly so, for the first is a divine resolve to destroy the earth by the deluge and the latter is a divine resolve never again to destroy the earth by deluge. Between these monologues is the ark in which Noah and his household “survived the passage through the death-waters and came forth alive to inherit the new earth beyond the sea of death.”¹⁰⁵ Benno Jacob’s remarks on 8.13 are pertinent, relating as they do to the rebirth theme:

Not only a new year for Noah begins, but it was a New Year’s Day for the whole world, the birthday of creation; on this very day the world rises again from the chaos of the flood. The removal of the ark’s cover is Noah’s New Year’s celebration with which a renewed creation and a new life start. Now we may understand the arrangements in 6.16. The roof acted as a covering on top of the ark; Noah removes it, not because it hindered his view, but in honor of the day for which one removes the old garment as a woman removes the garment of her widowhood (38.14) or the garment of captivity (Deut 21.13). The last words of verse 13 picture the joy of the sight (1.30). Noah sees the grounds for which he had longed.... This is God’s New Year’s present to him.¹⁰⁶

Westermann points to the dating structure as a deliberate parallel to Gen 1, the New Year corresponding to the seventh day.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the deluge narrative not only marks a return to Gen

¹⁰² For the Noahic covenant’s including the stipulations of 9.1-7, cf. S.D. Mason, “Another Flood?”
¹⁰³ Cf. W.M. Clark, “The Flood Narrative and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 206.
¹⁰⁴ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 157-58.
¹⁰⁵ M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 89.
¹⁰⁶ B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 58-59.
¹⁰⁷ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 435. Also, 450: “One cannot say that the Sabbath was instituted in Gen 2.1-3 or the New Year feast in Gen 8-9 (P); but both these sections in the primeval event lay a foundation. When the Sabbath and the New Year are set up in the history of God’s people and become fixed institutions, they can be referred to the

1.2, or “the precreation state,” but the “post-flood state is therefore a new creation, the cosmic waters have been tamed again.”¹⁰⁸ That in exiting the ark Noah is indeed entering a new world can also be argued by the verbal and thematic parallels that link the event to God’s call of Abraham.¹⁰⁹

Finally, 9.1, 7 repeat the blessing to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth,” making procreation life, that is, *new birth*, an emphatic close. Indeed, the many repetitions of Genesis 1 and 2, mark off Gen 8 and 9 as a new creation:¹¹⁰

- (1) Since man could not live on the earth when it was covered with water in chaps. 1 and 8, a subsiding of the water and separation of the land from the water took place, allowing the dry land to appear (1.9-10; 8.1-13);
- (2) “birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” are brought forth to “swarm upon the earth” in 1.20-21, 24-25 and 8.17-19;
- (3) God establishes the days and seasons in 1.14-18 and 8.22;
- (4) God’s blessing rests upon the animals as he commands them to “be fruitful and multiply on the earth” in both 1.22 and 8.17;
- (5) man is brought forth and he receives the blessing of God: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” in 1.28 and 9.1, 7;
- (6) man is given dominion over the animal kingdom in 1.28 and 9.2;
- (7) God provides food for man in 1.29-30 and 9.3 (incl. direct reference “As I have given the green plant”);
- (8) in 9.6 the writer quotes from 1.26-27 concerning the image of God in man.

primeval event. So they take on a universal significance, at least potentially.” Cf. G. Larsson, “Chronological Parallels between the Creation and the Flood,” 490-92.

¹⁰⁸ D.L. Petersen, “The Yahwist and the Flood,” *VT* 26 (1976) 441. Cf. J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 169. This is not, of course, to claim any simplistic return to “original perfection” (cf. D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 138). That the postdiluvian world is not in a pre-Fall condition may be part of the point of Gen 9.18-29 (cf. D. Steinmetz, “Vineyard, Farm, and Garden: The Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History,” *JBL* 113.2 [1994] 193-207). Indeed, if Ham’s sin is of maternal incest, then the “new” world of Gen 9.18-29 parallels that of 6.1-8, both structurally by chiasm and morally (cf. J.S. Bergsma and S.W. Hahn, “Noah’s Nakedness and the Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9.20-27),” *JBL* 124.1 [2005] 25-40).

¹⁰⁹ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 128; *ibid.*, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 128:

Genesis 8.15-20	Genesis 12.1-7
a. Then God said to Noah (8.15)	a. YHWH had said to Abram (12.1)
b. Come out from the ark (8.16)	b. Leave your country (12.1)
c. So Noah came out (8.18)	c. So Abram left (12.4)
d. Then Noah built an altar to the LORD (8.20)	d. So [Abram] built an altar there to the LORD (12.7)
e. Then God blessed Noah (9.1)	e. “And I [God] will bless you” (12.2)
f. “Be fruitful and increase” (9.1)	f. “I will make you into a great nation” (12.2)
g. “I now establish my covenant with you and with your seed” (9.9)	g. “To your seed, I will give this land” (12.7)

¹¹⁰ G.V. Smith, “Structure and Purpose in Genesis 1-11,” 310-11.

If the creation account may be read as an exodus from chaos to cosmos, the deluge narrative reads as an exodus from the old creation to the new.¹¹¹ Furthermore, as Genesis 1 foreshadows the covenant at Mount Sinai, both established by “ten words,” so the deluge narrative between them contains a tenfold repetition of “and God/YHWH said” (6.9a, 13a, 7.1a, 8.15a, 15b, 21a, 9.1a, 8a, 12a, 17)¹¹²—a new world has been established. “The ‘recreation’ motif begun in 8.1-3 concludes with the renewal of mankind on a mountain (8.4).”¹¹³ We, too, now shall approach that mountain.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN: SANCTUARY SYMBOLISM

The deluge narrative’s parallel themes with creation already suggest the possibility of a similar cosmic mountain context. To be sure, the macro-temple idea of creation is almost inescapable in this account of the world’s destruction. It may even be that the narrative is structured by seven paragraphs to mirror the creation account, both resolving in Sabbath rest (Gen 2.1-3// 8.20-22).

This parallel is suggested lexically in Exod 20.11’s use of נָחַ *nwh*:¹¹⁴

Gen 8.21: And YHWH smelled the restful (הַנְּחִיחָה) aroma...

Ex 20.11: For in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested (נָחַ) on the seventh day; therefore YHWH blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

The regular dating of events within the deluge narrative also gives one the impression that history is run like a liturgical calendar.¹¹⁵ It has been noted, for example, that the ark rested on one of the mountains of Ararat in the cultic month of Tishri, the most important month of the sacred convocations, celebrating the Day of Atonement, the Feasts of Trumpets, Tabernacles,

¹¹¹ Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, e.g., who points out intentional verbal, thematic, and structural parallels between the deliverance of Noah and the Exodus, e.g.: (1) God remembers his covenant, (2) sends a wind, and (3) dries the waters so his people might go through on dry ground (*Genesis*, 126).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, *Genesis*, 131.

¹¹³ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 34.

¹¹⁴ Cf. M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 90.

¹¹⁵ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 59.

and Sacred Assembly.¹¹⁶ Blenkinsopp makes the connection here, significant for our study, between creation, the deluge, and the tabernacle/temple:

According to the P chronology the new world emerged from the flood waters on the first day of the liturgical year, the same day on which the sanctuary was set up and dedicated in the wilderness (Gen 8.13; Ex 40.2). It will be recalled that the first temple was also dedicated during Sukkoth, the autumnal New Year Festival (1 Kgs 8.2, 65). We are also told that it took seven years to build which, following probable Near Eastern parallels, may well be related to the seven days of creation. The same dating system requires that the week of creation in Gen 1.1-2.4 be the first week of the liturgical year or, in other words, the primordial New Year Festival.¹¹⁷

That the deluge account also, as the creation account, constitutes cultic or liturgical narrative, informed by cosmic mountain ideology, will be manifest after considering the sanctuary symbolism in the narrative, symbolism serving to portray the Ararat mount as a cosmic mountain and the nature of the ark as a temple.

A. Ararat as Cosmic Mountain

The Ararat mount may itself be considered a cosmic mountain for many of the same features as the Eden mount which it parallels, some of which are as follows.

1. THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN

A subtle point to be sure, the mount is likely to be understood as something of a primordial mound, the first to emerge from the receding waters since the “tops of the mountains” (8.5) were seen after the ark had rested upon one of the mountains of Ararat (8.4). Similarly, that the ark rests on this mountain *before* the tops of the (other) mountains are seen lends to the idea that it has come to rest on the highest of mountains. Von Rad believes the mountain of Ararat is

¹¹⁶ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 385.

¹¹⁷ J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 (1976) 283-84.

certainly intended by the author to signify the highest mountain of the world.¹¹⁸ Some thus read the distributive plural¹¹⁹ in 8.4 as a singular, designating it as the highest mountain.¹²⁰

2. GEOGRAPHIC ALLUSIONS TO EDEN

That the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie in the region of Ararat¹²¹ may be another intended parallel with the mount of paradise (cf. Gen 2.14). Interestingly, “scholars from Philo’s time to the present have placed Eden in the mountains of Armenia.”¹²²

3. THE OMPHALOS

The narrative portrays the Ararat mount as the *omphalos* in as much as all living things, humanity and wildlife, flow out from it to fill the earth.

4. PLACE OF REST

Part of the shared terminology between temples and the cosmic mountain they represent is precisely the idea of their being a spot of “rest” (מנוחה *m^ʿnuḥâ*),¹²³ an idea repeated in the deluge narrative with reference to the mount (8.4, 21). Indeed, this is the language used in Ps 132.14 of YHWH’s choosing Mount Zion for his “rest” (מנוחתו *m^ʿnûḥātî*).¹²⁴ The climactic¹²⁵ arrival of Noah to this paradisiacal mountain is, moreover, described in terms similar to that of Adam’s

¹¹⁸ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 129.

¹¹⁹ Cf. R. Gordis, “Job XL: An Additional Note,” *VT* 14.4 (1964) 491-94. For problems with identifying “Mt Ararat,” cf. L.R. Bailey, “Wood from ‘Mount Ararat’: Noah’s Ark?” *BA* 40.4 (1977) 137-46 (esp. 137-38).

¹²⁰ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 443-44.

¹²¹ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 57.

¹²² E. Eisenberg, *The Ecology of Eden* (New York: Knopf, 1998) 91.

¹²³ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 206-7. Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 144; Ps 132.13-14.

¹²⁴ Cf. S. Terrien, “The Omphalos Myth and the Hebrew Religion,” *VT* 20.3 (1970) 315-38 (317).

¹²⁵ Cf. R.E. Longacre (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 250) who notes the Ark’s coming to rest is the climax of a series of culminating events.

placement in the mount of Eden: Adam was “set”/“brought to rest” (נוח *hiphil*) in the garden of Eden (2.15); the ark of Noah comes to “rest” (נוח) on the mountain of Ararat (8.4).¹²⁶

5. THE DIVINE PRESENCE

Additionally, this mount becomes the meeting place of man with God—the place of covenantal blessing and worship. “Ararat was constituted the holy mountain of the Lord,” writes Kline, “by the positioning of the ark-temple there, by the erection of the altar on it, and, most emphatically, by the sanctifying Presence of the Lord himself—a presence manifested in his revelation of his acceptance of the offerings presented on the altar (Gen 8.20, 21).”¹²⁷

In sum, while more parallels to Eden could be drawn, along with other characteristic features of the cosmic mountain (such as its being a refuge from the waters), what has been briefly delineated suffices to consider the Ararat mountain in terms of a cosmic mountain, and thus the deluge narrative in terms of cosmic mountain ideology, needing to be interpreted as “cultic” literature. Along this line, Damrosch considers Sinai “a new Ararat,” positing a steady foreshadowing of the Solomonic temple, the greater detail of the tabernacle being the switch-point between the ark and the temple.¹²⁸

B. *The Ark as Temple*

While popular depictions of the ark often mislead one into viewing it as a boat, the vessel,

¹²⁶ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 351. The “grace principle” of ascent was noted in the last chapter, comparing Gen 8.4 with Adam’s being “rested” in the garden in 2.15.

¹²⁷ M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 90. He refers to the story of Ararat as the “Har Magedon of the world that then was,” with the ark on Ararat symbolizing “the consummate kingdom of God” (78). Believing altars to have been the center of the covenant (Gen 4.4; 8.20), Kline also posits the altar itself as a symbolic representation of the cosmic mountain, “the heavenly mountain of God, site of the Lord’s cosmic throne” (81, 82). He further states (90): “With the temple-city of the ark situated on it, Ararat was the equivalent in Noah’s days of Zion, the site of the temple-city of Jerusalem. And along with Zion, Mount Ararat was a type of the ‘great and high mountain,’ landfall of the temple-city of New Jerusalem on its descent from heaven at the eschatological finale (Rev 21.10).”

¹²⁸ D. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant: Transformation of Genre in the Growth of Biblical Literature* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) 292.

having no sails, rudder, oarsman, etc., was no boat¹²⁹—and Noah was no “captain,” steering his own fate. Indeed, that the ark was completely given over to the sovereign guidance of God seems to be a primary emphasis in the narrative.¹³⁰ Further, the instructions to build the ark, within the unit of Gen 6.13-17, utilize three times as many verses than for the deluge,¹³¹ demonstrating both the preeminence of the deliverance motif (over that of talionic judgment), as well as the emphasis upon the ark itself as the means of that deliverance. How would the ANE audience have understood the ark? Several considerations lead to the conclusion that the Ark was meant to be seen as symbolizing a temple. “There are striking parallels between the tabernacle and the ark of Noah,” writes Fretheim, “both of which are viewed as a means by which the people of God can move in a secure and ordered way beyond apostasy and through a world of disorder on their way to a new creation (cf. [Exod] 40.2 with Gen 8.13).”¹³² Beyond this general comparison, moreover, one may also find detailed parallels.

1. PARALLELS WITH THE TABERNACLE

First, there appears to be deliberate parallels between the construction of the ark and that of the tabernacle (as well as that of creation in Gen 1).¹³³ The plans for each are revealed by God

¹²⁹ *Contra* A. Ross, *Genesis*, 72. V.P. Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 281) says Noah may be a “shipwright”; however see his comments on 296.

¹³⁰ U. Cassuto, for example, notes: “In the Torah there is no reference to a ship or to a pilot or to navigation. ...[T]he Torah wished of set purpose to oppose the Gentile tradition and to declare that Noah’s deliverance was not due to his seafaring skill but only to the will of His Heavenly Father. ...[Noah] had to put his trust in the Lord, and He would do what was necessary” (*Genesis* II, 60-61). So, too, N.M. Sarna writes: “The term [*tevah*] suggests a boxlike craft made to float on the water but without rudder or sail or any other navigational aid. It does not use the services of a crew. The use of *tevah* is intended to emphasize that the fate of the occupants is to be determined solely by the will of God and not to be attributed to the skill of man” (*Genesis*, 52). Similarly, B. Jacob noted: “The ark is not a ship; it has neither a keel, nor a steering apparatus, neither mast nor sail. It shall be a house afloat which can protect its inhabitant during a flood and for this reason be made of wood” (*Genesis*, 49). C. Westermann makes the point that while Mesopotamian parallels have oddly shaped vessels still referred to as a “ship,” the biblical ark, while looking more like a ship, is rather called a “chest” (*Genesis 1-11*, 420). Cf. also B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 135.

¹³¹ Cf. B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 52.

¹³² T.E. Fretheim, “‘Because the Whole Earth is Mine’: Theme and Narrative in Exodus,” *Int* 50.3 (1996) 238.

¹³³ G.J. Wenham notes: “In Exod 25-31, there are also parallels in phraseology with the directions for building the tabernacle and its furniture that suggest that both ark and tabernacle were seen as a sanctuary for the righteous”

(6.14-16 // Ex 25.8-9); God commands the construction (6.14 – Impv עשה // 25.9 – Juss תעשה); the action is carried out precisely, according to God's command (6.22: צוה אתו אלהים בן עשה); the construction is set within the context of a covenant (6.8 // Ex 34.27); the accounts resolve in divine blessing (9.1 // Ex 39.43). Further, if the emendation of קנים *qinnîm* to קנים *qānîm* in 6.14 is valid and “reed” is the correct translation, it may be an allusion to the menorah of the tabernacle, קנים being used of the shaft and branches (Ex 25.31-32; 37.17-18).¹³⁴ Matthews also suggests the detail of the olive leaf (8.11) likely caused early readers to make a connection with the tabernacle, olive oil fueling the menorah (Ex 27.20; Lev 24.2-4) and being utilized for anointing the tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex 30.24-29).¹³⁵ Another parallel is in the similar dimensions of the ark and tabernacle, being “the only buildings that the Torah describes,”¹³⁶ with the surface area of the ark being three times that of the tabernacle courtyard (100 x 50 cubits, Ex 27.9-13).¹³⁷ Wenham sums Jacob's surmise that “if each deck were further subdivided into three sections, the ark would have had three decks the same height as the tabernacle and three sections on each deck the same size as the tabernacle courtyard.”¹³⁸ Steven W. Holloway and Joseph Blenkinsopp posit that the dimensions and design of Noah's ark correspond to those of the

(*Genesis 1-15*, 172). Cf. also J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 125; *ibid.*, *Genesis*, 119, 121-22; Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 283.

¹³⁴ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 364.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 388.

¹³⁶ C. Westermann (*Genesis 1-11*, 421) quoting B. Jacob. Although his case is not especially persuasive, H.G. May's argument for the box-like Ark (ארון) of the Covenant being a miniature temple (“The Ark – A Miniature Temple,” *AJSL* 52.4 [1936] 215-34) is suggestive by parallel to the box-like *tebā*. May does, in fact, draw a parallel to the early synagogue Ark (חבה) in which the Torah scrolls were kept and which were decorated as miniature buildings (225-26). J.D. Levenson notes, further, that Psalm 24 is recited by Jews as the Torah scroll is being returned to this Ark, which he takes to imply that the reading of the Torah is analogous to the ascent of the sacred mountain (*Sinai & Zion*, 170 fn 128), but which, however, may just as easily imply the scroll's “ascent” into the Ark.

¹³⁷ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 173.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, *Genesis 1-15*, 174 (B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora*, 192).

Solomonic temple.¹³⁹ It is also possible that the “covering of the ark” (אֶת־מִכְסֵּה הַתֵּבָה - Gen 8.13) establishes a link to the hide “covering of the tabernacle” (אֶת־מִכְסֵּה הָאֹהֶל - Ex 40.19)—the ark being the only exception to the term’s otherwise exclusive usage in reference to the tent of meeting.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps not insignificant is the further link of the technical term מִבְּיַת וּמִחוּץ *mibbayit ûmiḥûš* in 6.14, language shared only with the tabernacle (cf. Ex 25.11; 37.2) and in Solomon’s building program (within an ironic context of the temple; 1 Ki 7.9).¹⁴¹ Yet another parallel is drawn in relation to the calendar: the deluge waters recede on the same day the sanctuary in the wilderness is later dedicated (Gen 8.13 // Ex 40.2), the first day of the first month—New Year’s Day.¹⁴² Waltke expresses the point of these parallels well: “The Lord specifies the construction of the ark, just as he specified the construction of the tabernacle. He does not entrust the means of salvation to human imagination.”¹⁴³

2. COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Secondly, comparative literature¹⁴⁴—the Gilgamesh epic in particular—also leads to the conclusion that the ark is portrayed as a temple. In 1927 Paul Haupt posited that “the huge ship of the Babylonian Noah, 525 feet long and 210 feet wide and deep, with seven stories, may have

¹³⁹ S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” *ZAW* 103 (1991) 348. Cf. also J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 286: “[I]n their basic design both Noah’s ark and Solomon’s temple reflect the three-decker world of ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies, a feature which, for fairly obvious reasons, could not be reproduced in the wilderness sanctuary.” Cassuto had originally posited that תֵּבָה was best understood as a parallelepiped (*Genesis* II, 41).

¹⁴⁰ Gen 6.16, however, utilizes a different term. Wenham makes the same point, *Genesis 1-15*, 187. Cf. also K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 389.

¹⁴¹ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 44.

¹⁴² Cf. S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 334.

¹⁴³ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 135. NOTE: Parallels of function, such as this quotes demonstrates, will be brought out below in 5. Temple Functions.

¹⁴⁴ For a brief overview of the Mesopotamian flood stories and their possible relationship(s) with the Biblical account, cf. D.T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction,” pp 27-57 in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, R.S. Hess and D.T. Tsumura, eds. (SBTS, vol. 4; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994) esp. 52-57.

been suggested by the colossal Babylonian temple-towers in seven stories.”¹⁴⁵ The equation of the Gilgamesh ark with the ziggurat was also made by M.E.L. Mallowan:

[The ark] was described in the Gilgamesh epic as rising in seven stages which were subdivided vertically into nine sections with sixty-three compartments: in one passage it was referred to as *ekallu*, a noun meaning temple or palace, and I therefore venture to suggest that the narrator had in mind a floating Ziggurat and that he imagined one—always a refuge in time of flood—as sailing over the vast inland sea.¹⁴⁶

Holloway, who cites both Haupt and Mallowan, convincingly demonstrates that Gilg XI “sports numerous clues as to the ziggurat identity of the ark, and that the description itself is in keeping with those of other ziggurats found in cuneiform literature.”¹⁴⁷ The following is a summary outline of Holloway’s “clues”:

- (1) While the dimensions of the ark are: length = width = height, the height itself may be measured by a plumb-line with no reference made to the receding upward slope. That the dimensions are further defined as having six roofs and seven vertical components supports a ziggurat complex. According to the Esagila tablet, the great ziggurat of Babylon, Etemenanki, had equal height, length, and breadth (90 x 90 x 90 meters), as did the “ideal” ziggurat form in a tablet published by D.J. Wiseman (21 x 21 x 21 meters). Additionally, modern excavations have revealed several ziggurat foundations that are square in form (with the probability that the original elevation may have matched its width and length).¹⁴⁸
- (2) By a multiple entendre, Utnapishtim is guided by the trickster god Ea to tell the community of Shuruppak that he is going down to the *apsû* with Ea to dwell. The populace would have understood the *apsû* of Ea to mean Ea’s temple of that name in Eridu. Also, the ark’s sailing over the waters of the *apsû* meets the criteria for the sacral locus of all ziggurats to be founded upon the *apsû*.
- (3) In Gilg XI, 95 the ark is called *ekallu*, a common Akkadian word for palace, but not ever used for a sea-going vessel (outside this passage).
- (4) The identity of the ark is made explicit in Gilg XI, 156 where Utnapishtim says: “I made a regular offering atop the mountain ziggurat” [*áš-kun sur-qin-na ina muhhi* (UGU) *ziq-qur-rat šadî* (KUR)].
- (5) The expression of the themes of the primordial hillock, the waters of life and death, and the re-creation of the world (cf. Lundquist’s propositions nos. 2 and 3, “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Temple Typology” pp 205-19 in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, and A.R.W. Green, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983] 208).
- (6) The plan and measurements of the ark/ temple are revealed by a god (Ea) to the king (Utnapishtim?) (Cf. Lundquist’s proposition no. 7, “What is a Temple?” 211).

¹⁴⁵ P. Haupt, “The Ship of the Babylonian Noah,” *BASS* 10.2 (1927) 10.

¹⁴⁶ M.E.L. Mallowan, “Noah’s Flood Reconsidered,” *Iraq* 26 (1964) 65. His insight about ziggurats providing a refuge during times of flooding is remarkably apropos in light of cosmic mountain ideology.

¹⁴⁷ S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 339. Cf. also R.S. Hendel, “The Shape of Utnapishtim’s Ark” *ZAW* 107.1 (1995) 128-29. While Hendel argues against the ziggurat dimensions espoused by Holloway, retaining the traditional reading of the ark as a cube, he agrees that there is an analogy between the seven-storied ark and a multi-tiered ziggurat, and that like “a ziggurat...Utnapishtim’s ark does have cosmic symbolism,” representing “the universe *in nuce*.” For Utnapishtim’s ark as a seven-tiered microcosm, cf. also J. Bottéro, “La première Arche de Noé,” *L’Histoire* 94 (1986) 80. M. Kovacs, also, while understanding the ark as a perfect cube, sees it as a “theological allusion to the dimensions of a ziggurat” (*The Epic of Gilgamesh* [Palo Alto, CA: Stanford U Press, 1989] 99 fn 3).

¹⁴⁸ Cf. A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats as the Architectonic Representations of the Archetype of the Cosmic Mountain,” *Katunob* 10 (1977) 69-113 (85).

- (7) The ark of Utnapishtim behaved like a temple with respect to its providing a divinely-appointed haven of safety (cf. Lundquist's proposition 8a, "What is a Temple?" 212). Every living thing, further, flowed from the ark like the super-fecundating waters of abundance and prosperity associated with the temple.
- (8) Utnapishtim's first act in the new world is to relate humanity to the divine by means of sacrifice (cf. Lundquist's proposition 14, "What is a Temple?" 217f).

That the Gilgamesh epic contains many facets of temple ideology, the ark itself representing a ziggurat, makes it likely the deluge narrative of Genesis was also authored and understood within the matrix of ANE temple ideology. In light of the "Tower of Babel" narrative, which Holloway reads as a polemic against the ziggurat as a religious symbol "well-nigh universal to Mesopotamian civilization," he believes the change in the deluge account's ark symbolism from a cosmic ziggurat to a cosmic Solomonic temple, "a symbol as peculiar to Judah as one could hope to find," was natural.¹⁴⁹ "Particularly in light of the ziggurat symbolism in the Mesopotamian Flood narrative," writes Holloway, "it is unlikely that chance could account for the correspondence in dimensional proportions and structure between Noah's ark and the Solomonic temple."¹⁵⁰ His theory of provenance aside, that both the deluge of Genesis and the epic of Gilgamesh share a typical ANE context of temple ideology, with the ark representing a temple, appears well founded.

3. COSMOS ANALOGY

Thirdly, and also a feature shared with comparative literature,¹⁵¹ the ark of Noah is presented as a micro-cosmos or "cosmos in miniature,"¹⁵² and so as a temple.¹⁵³ In Gen 6.16, God commands: "Lower, second, and third decks you shall make," reflecting the three-decked world of ANE

¹⁴⁹ S.W. Holloway, "What Ship Goes There?" 352.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁵¹ Many scholars see Utnapishtim's ark as having cosmological significance, representing a seven-tiered view of the cosmos. Cf. J. Bottéro, "La première Arche de Noé"; R.S. Hendel, "The Shape of Utnapishtim's Ark."

¹⁵² M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 30.

¹⁵³ Cf. S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 90.

cosmography,¹⁵⁴ noted already in the creation account of Gen 1. The micro-cosmos of salvation, the ark in 6.16, is then immediately contrasted with the cosmos damned to destruction in 6.17. The ark, that is, will function as a substitute cosmos and refuge from the destruction of the world. And once this mini-world is made, such that it is suitable for inhabitants, it is filled up with living creatures: wildlife, herd-animals, creepers, birds, human beings, so that it is a “creation in miniature.”¹⁵⁵ To be sure, the mainline imperative to build the ark (6.14) is the backbone upon which the paragraph hangs, all other verbs expressing in detail its outworking.¹⁵⁶ In the previous chapter of our thesis, we suggested the possibility that “the heavens and the earth” (a merism for the “three-decked house” of heavens-earth-sea) of Gen 1.1 may have been understood in terms of a cosmic mountain, along the lines of the parallelism of “new heavens and a new earth”/“Jerusalem”/“holy mountain” in Isa 65.17/18/25. That argument is, perhaps, strengthened here as it appears Noah’s three-decked ark, symbolizing a temple, constitutes a microcosm of “the heavens and earth,” with living creatures to-boot. Moreover, as my panel outline (below) exposes, the building and filling of the ark in 6.13-22 exhibits a correspondence with the “building” and filling of the cosmos in Gen 1:

¹⁵⁴ Cf. W.G. Lambert, “The Cosmology of Sumer and Babylon,” pp 42-65 in *Ancient Cosmologies*, C. Blacker and M. Loewe, eds. (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1975) 56-60. Utilizing the *Epic of Creation*, Lambert establishes the three levels of the universe, housing the three gods:

Anu – Heaven
 Enlil – Esharra
 Ea – Eshgalla

Cf. also J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 286; L. Jacobs, “Jewish Cosmology.”

¹⁵⁵ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 121.

¹⁵⁶ R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 242.

	BUILDING THE ARK/ MICRO-COSMOS GEN 6.13-16	FILLING THE ARK/ MICRO-COSMOS GEN 6.17-22
DECLARATION OF JUDGMENT (MACRO-COSMOS)	¹³ And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh (כָּל־בָּשָׂר) has come (בָּא) before me for the earth (אֶרֶץ) is filled with unrighteousness from them –look at me (הִנְנִי)! I am ready to destroy (מַשְׁחִיתָם) them with the earth (אֶרֶץ)! ”	¹⁷ Now look at Me (הִנְנִי)! I Myself am ready to bring (מְבִיא) the deluge of waters upon the earth (אֶרֶץ), to destroy (לְשַׁחֵת) from under the heavens all flesh (כָּל־בָּשָׂר) having the spirit of life within, all that is upon the earth (אֶרֶץ) will perish.
INSTRUCTION FOR SALVATION (MICRO-COSMOS)	¹⁴ Make yourself an ark of gopher-wood; with reeds ¹⁵⁷ you shall make the ark, and seal it inside and outside with pitch. ¹⁵ This is how you are to make it: the length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. ¹⁶ A roof ¹⁵⁸ you shall make for the ark, finishing it within a cubit from above; and the entrance of the ark you will set in its side. Lower, second, and third decks you shall make (תַּעֲשֶׂה).	¹⁸ But I will confirm My covenant with you and you will enter the ark –you, your sons, your wife, and the wives of your sons with you. ¹⁹ And of all living, of all flesh, you will bring two of everything into the ark to keep alive with you – they shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kind, of animals according to their kind, and of all the creepers that creep on the earth according to their kinds –two of everything will come to you to keep them alive. ²¹ But as for you, take for yourself of all food that is edible and gather it for yourself, and it will be for you and for them for food.” ²² Noah did according to all that God commanded him –just so he did (עָשָׂה).

One can readily see the parallels between vv 13 and 17: both (1) involve divine resolutions to destroy the earth; (2) utilize a הִנָּה clause; (3) use the same terms the same amount of times (הִנָּה x1; אֶרֶץ x1; שָׁחַת x1; בָּא x1; כָּל־בָּשָׂר x1; אֶרֶץ x2), the first two only appearing in the DECLARATION section. Instructively, here, “end” (קֵץ) of v 13 is in parallel, utilizing a form of בָּא, with “the deluge” (הַמַּבּוּל) in v 17. The panels themselves are in parallel by their vertical Declaration and Instruction structure (including the shift from macro to micro-cosmos, the juxtaposition of which also serves to emphasize the ark’s “replacing” the cosmos), as well as by the horizontal thematic progression from building to filling the ark. Further, both panels end with a form of the word

¹⁵⁷ Cf. E. Ullendorff, “The Construction of Noah’s Ark,” *VT* 4.1 (1954) 95-96. For otherwise, cf. E.A. Speiser, *Genesis*, 52. Also, Ullendorff’s comments about the two parts of the building description, moving from general (v 14) to detailed (vv 15-16) may also be applied to the “filling” section, moving from general (vv 18-19a) to detailed (vv 19b-21).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. J.F. Armstrong, “A Critical Note on Genesis VI 16a α ” *VT* 10.3 (1960) 328-33.

“make/do” (עשה).¹⁵⁹ The entire unit itself is synthesized by seven uses each of the words “ark” (תִּקְוָה) and “make/do” (עשה), each appearing five times in the first panel and twice in the second. And, finally, there is a Command//Fulfillment frame around the unit with the terms “God” (אֱלֹהִים) and “Noah” (נֹחַ) in chiastic arrangement (6.13//6.22). While the outline may, perhaps, be susceptible to a more detailed delineation of parallels to the creation account, yet this broad panel structure is adequate for a general comparison: the ark, like the “heavens and the earth” of Gen 1, is first built into a three-tiered “cosmos,” then filled (with language explicitly recalling the creation narrative, e.g., “after their kind” לְמִינֵהוּ).¹⁶⁰ Significantly, Noah, the image-bearer of God, functions as God in the building of this miniature cosmos.

4. PARADISIACAL PORTRAYAL

Fourthly, the narrative portrays the ark with paradisiacal motifs. Noah, as “Adam *redivivus*,”¹⁶¹ abides peacefully with the animals in the Paradise of the ark. And like “the garden, the ark is constructed as a space for faithful living in the presence of God.”¹⁶² Especially within the context of a corrupt generation that has utterly “destroyed” its way on the earth, Noah’s household along with the remnant of creatures manifests the glory of a colony of heaven, the very irruption of the kingdom of God amidst the chaos of a world consigned to destruction. Thus Sarna writes: “Noah’s ark is the matrix of a new creation, and, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, he lives in harmony with the animals.”¹⁶³ Building upon the narrative of Gen 2, eschatological

¹⁵⁹ As does the Creation account (cf. Gen 2.3). Indeed the repetition of עשה throughout this Ark pericope (x7) recalls its repetition in Creation (x10).

¹⁶⁰ Further, the enigmatic use of תִּקְוָה in v 16 at the least serves to recall the two-fold use of כֶּלֶה in Gen 2.1, 2.

¹⁶¹ M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: OUP, 1985) 318; *idem.*, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 31. Cf. C.J. Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2006) 87; N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 56.

¹⁶² A.C. Leder, “Waiting for the Land: The Journey Begins in and Ends with Exile (Genesis)” (2006) 4, accessed at: <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/thisWeek/bibleBookPapers/lederGenesis.pdf>. Similarly, B. Jacob notes: “The ark, as [Noah’s] house before the flood, was an island of virtue and fear of God in an ocean of wickedness and sin” (*Genesis*, 55).

¹⁶³ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 50.

prophecies look to the peaceful dwelling among animals as an expression of Paradise, e.g., Isaiah 11.6-9 (cf. Hosea 2.18):¹⁶⁴

The wolf also will dwell with the lamb,
The leopard will lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child will lead them.
The cow and the bear will graze;
Their young ones will lie down together;
And the lion will eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child will play by the cobra's hole,
And the weaned child will put his hand in the viper's den.
They will neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain,
For the earth will be full of the knowledge of YHWH
As the waters cover the sea.

This Zion hymn of Isaiah portrays the paradisiacal nature of YHWH's "holy mountain," such cosmic mountain ideology underlying the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem, but also informing our understanding of the ark as a temple in the deluge narrative. Even as Isaiah foretells the nations streaming to "the mountain of the house of YHWH" (Isa 2.2), this cosmic mountain motif is also evident in Gen 7.6-16 with its emphatically expansive description, noted by Cassuto, of the remnant of all living creatures parading into the ark:

Here we have a mighty and amazing spectacle: the tremendous, endless procession of all the creatures streaming from all parts of the earth to Noah's abode in order to find shelter with him in the ark. ...[A] magnificent and graphic picture of that wondrous scene, the mass pilgrimage from all parts of the world to the one place that promised salvation to every species of creature.¹⁶⁵

It may indeed be that this archetypal salvation through the ark has informed the hope of Zion, to which the nations will stream. Exodus out of the "old cosmos" and entrance into the ark,

¹⁶⁴ B. Jacob captures the image well: "[The animals coming to Noah] expresses not merely that the animals seek human companionship with man, but that it is this man Noah alone whom the whole animal kingdom, forgetting all enmities, obediently follows as their provider into the ark. It is a model for the general peace among all creatures in Messianic time. This is more than the peace in Adam's paradise. He who causes this miracle is a pious man who walked with God" (*Genesis*, 53). B. Waltke writes: "Within this miniature cosmos, which is designed by the Creator (see 6.15), human beings under God tend to the creation (6.18), animals submissively stay within their space (6.20), and vegetation sustains its lords (6.20)" (*Genesis*, 155). Cf. G.M. Tucker, "The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals," pp 215-25 in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, W.P. Brown and S.D. McBride Jr, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 155.

¹⁶⁵ U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 80.

dramatically underscored by the phrase “on that precise day” (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא 7.11), “on this same day they entered” (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַהוּא בָּא 7.13), foreshadows the exodus out of Egypt (בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַהוּא Exod 12.17, 41, 51) and arrival at the cosmic mountain of Sinai (“that same day they entered” בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא בָּאוּ Ex 19.1-3) where Israel camps at the foot of the mountain and Moses ascends to meet with God.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, this paradisiacal depiction also serves the portrayal of Noah as a righteous man, even as a “righteous king,” for the peaceable kingdom is precisely the result of the just ruler’s advent (i.e., the Messiah).¹⁶⁷ Concluding this point, now, we note the

ark was designed to be a replica of the cosmos conceptualized as a three-storied house, the temple residence of God (Isa 66.1). Besides the three-storied structure, the door and window are mentioned as architectural features of the ark, and these too have counterparts in the cosmic creation house with its window of heaven (cf., e.g., Gen 7.11; 8.2) and door of the deep (cf., e.g., Job 38.8-11)—the two access points for the flood waters. As in the case of other replicas of the heavenly sanctuary, like the tabernacle and temple as well as the visible cosmos, so in the case of his ark-house it was God who provided the architectural plans (Gen 6.14-16)...Accordingly, the ark, replica of the cosmos, with prototypically glorified occupants, was in typological symbol the consummate cosmic holy city as well as the cosmic heavenly temple.¹⁶⁸

5. TEMPLE FUNCTIONS

K.A. Matthews considers the ark’s “only religious significance lies in how Noah foreshadows Moses and his faithful carrying out of the Lord’s tabernacle plans.”¹⁶⁹ Aside from the obedience of building a structure, he rejects Holloway’s thesis and gives the ark “no cultic significance,” stating the dimensions of the ark and Solomonite temple, while having “a general similarity...rectangular and three-story in shape,” are not the same and that there are no allusions to the ark as temple or palace in the Old Testament.¹⁷⁰ One might argue that the tabernacle and temple narratives are themselves such allusions; that cultic themes do pervade the ark narrative; that the parallels he concedes between Noah’s and Moses’ obedience in construction invite a

¹⁶⁶ It is also marks entrance to the Holy of holies on the Day of Atonement (Lev 23.28, 29, 30). Cf. also K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 375.

¹⁶⁷ G.M. Tucker, “The Peaceable Kingdom and a Covenant with the Wild Animals,” 217.

¹⁶⁸ M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 87, 89 (cf. 32).

¹⁶⁹ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 363-64 and fn 24.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

consideration of the parallels between the ark and the tabernacle that are constructed by them as “the only buildings the Torah describes”;¹⁷¹ and that requiring architectural similarities beyond a rectangular three-storied shape may easily be subject to *reductio ad absurdum* (*ad ridiculum*). Aspects of Matthews’s argument, that the ark narrative cannot allude to the temple because “there is no allusion to the ark as temple in the Old Testament,” may also be questioned as circular. Moreover, considering the point made earlier that the ark is not a ship leaves open to investigation the question of what the ark *is* meant to be taken for in the narrative. It is to be hoped, then, that a return to the fundamental question “What is a temple?” will demonstrate convincingly that the ark indeed *functions* as a temple, and that parallels between Noah’s and Moses’ obedience inform a theological significance to the ark itself not commonly appreciated. Furthermore, and for the sake of clarity, we do not contend for the ark’s *being* a temple—only that it is portrayed as a temple in the narrative for theological reasons.¹⁷² Our interpretation of the ark, furthermore, may lead to a more satisfying conclusion, if not resolution, regarding the enigma of the term: תבה. In an article on this subject, for example, Cohen dismisses Cassuto’s suggestion that the biblical narrative refers to the ark as a parallelepiped “and not that of a ship,” and rejects outright the widely accepted Egyptian cognates *db³t* and *tbt* (“chest, coffin,” “palace, house”) because “*never are either of these words used in Egyptian texts for boats.*”¹⁷³ He further rejects the use of “palace” *êkallu* in the Akkadian flood story as suspect even while admitting that reference to a “gate” *bâbu* on both vessels, Utnapishtim’s ark in the Akkadian flood story

¹⁷¹ As previously quoted, C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 421.

¹⁷² These pre-tabernacle narratives, we have been suggesting, serve the purpose of explaining the logic and necessity of the tabernacle/temple cultus. So, one may ask, “What does the tabernacle symbolism of the ark teach?” And a basic, at least preliminary, answer, for example, would be: “The life-delivering, cosmos-sustaining function of the tabernacle cultus.”

¹⁷³ C. Cohen, “Hebrew *tbt*: Proposed Etymologies,” *JANES* 4 (1972) 39 (emphasis original). While, with Cassuto, he posits the use of “ark” in Exod 2 as deliberately recalling the deluge narrative (and with this we certainly agree), this in no way resolves the problem—any rare or made up term, then, would establish a link, but why תבה?

and Sargon's receptacle in "The Legend of Sargon," is "exceedingly rare in nautical terminology."¹⁷⁴ While one awaits a solid philological explanation of תִּבְהָ, the suggestion that the ark is being deliberately portrayed in terms of a temple at least explains (1) the absence of more common nautical terms, i.e., for "ship, boat," and (2) the significant presence of the "gate,"¹⁷⁵ uncommon within nautical contexts.

Considering, then, Lundquist's propositions for defining a temple,¹⁷⁶ we turn now to examine how the ark functions as a temple within the deluge narrative. Lundquist's propositions are as follows:¹⁷⁷

- (1) The temple is the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain.
- (2) The cosmic mountain represents the primordial hillock, the place which first emerged from the waters that covered the earth during the creative process.
- (3) The temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself –or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring.
- (4) The temple is built on a separate, sacral, set-apart space.
- (5) The temple is oriented toward the four world regions or cardinal directions, and to various celestial bodies such as the polar star.
- (6) Temples, in their architectonic orientation, express the idea of a successive ascension toward heaven.
- (7) The plan and measurements of the temple are revealed by God to the king, and the plan must be carefully carried out.
- (8) The temple is the central, organizing, unifying institution in ancient Near Eastern society.
8a: The temple is associated with abundance and prosperity, indeed is perceived as the giver of these.
8b: The destruction or loss of the temple is seen as calamitous and fatal to the community in which the temple stood.
- (9) Inside the temple, images of deities as well as kings, temple priests and worshippers are washed, anointed, clothed, fed, enthroned and symbolically initiated into the presence of deity, and thus into eternal life.
- (10) The temple is associated with the realm of the dead, the underworld, the afterlife, the grave –being the link between this world and the next.
- (11) Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often at the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony.
- (12) The tablets of destiny are consulted, making the deity's will known to the people.
- (13) There is a close interrelationship between temple and law in the ancient Near East, the building or restoration of a temple perceived as the moving force behind a restating or "codifying" of basic legal principles.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 41-43.

¹⁷⁵ In the gate liturgy section of this chapter we will consider the gate aspect of the ark, if only in relation to the deluge narrative (not with reference to comparative ANE literature).

¹⁷⁶ J.M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology," pp 205-19 in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, H.B. Huffmon, et. al., eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983). Cf. also J.L. Carroll's reorganization of Lundquist's propositions: "A Revised Temple Typology" in *Hagion Temenos*, 2d ed., S. Ricks, ed. (Provo, Ut: BYU, 2005), accessed at: http://james.jlcarroll.net/publications/A_Revised_Temple_Typology.doc

¹⁷⁷ J.M. Lundquist, "What is a Temple?"

(14) The temple is a place of sacrifice.

(15) The temple and its ritual are enshrouded in secrecy.

While these categories are descriptive, it is, of course, unnecessary and unreasonable to demand of one narrative that every defining attribute of a temple be checked off as if the ark's being a temple were a matter of argument rather than a shared ANE assumption. However, the many ways in which the ark does function as a temple in the narrative are nonetheless impressive. The plan and measurements of the ark were revealed by God, and carefully carried out (prop. 7). The ark functions as a refuge from the waters of chaos, a feature implicit in props. 1, 2, and brought out as a distinctively Semitic characteristic of the cosmic mountain by G.A. Anderson.¹⁷⁸ In this regard, some scholars have noted the parallel function of deliverance between the ark and tabernacle. Waltke, for example, points out that as the ark preserved Noah's covenant family through the chaotic waters, the tabernacle and Solomonic temple would later preserve the covenant people among the chaotic nations.¹⁷⁹ Sailhamer similarly notes that salvation through the ark during the forty days and nights of rain may be an intentional comparison with the salvation through the Tabernacle during the forty years in the wilderness.¹⁸⁰ Returning to props. 1 and 2, we recall that while the mountains are covered, the ark remains above the waters—a feature common to cosmic mountain ideology.¹⁸¹ Now while authorial intent on this point is

¹⁷⁸ G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 190, 200f. NOTE: S.W. Holloway delineates the temple as a haven from the waters of chaos as an expansion of Lundquist's prop. 8a ("What Ship Goes There?" 336). M. Kline also notes the ark, "a sanctuary in the sense of a refuge from the stormy deep, was also a sanctuary in the sense of holy house of God. That is another feature common to the occurrences of the Har Magedon pattern we are examining; each involves the building of a temple as the site of assembly for the meeting of the Creator-King with his worshippers, men and angels" (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 87).

¹⁷⁹ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 152.

¹⁸⁰ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 122. Walton's depiction of the tabernacle is significant here precisely because he is not deliberately correlating it to Noah's Ark—the parallel is simply manifest of itself: "The sanctuary of Israel represented a small, idealized island of order in a world of threatened chaos. It was a place that preserved equilibrium for God's presence, which in turn was an anchor against disorder" ("Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of Leviticus," *BBR* 11.2 [2001] 296).

¹⁸¹ For example, in the 2d century B.C. book of *Jubilees* (4.24), Eden is thought to have functioned as a refuge from the flood waters, a feature later ascribed in Rabbinic legend to the Temple Mount of Jerusalem (*b. Qidd.* 69a-b). Cf. G.A. Anderson, "The Cosmic Mountain," 201-02; A.J. Wesinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the*

debatable, it is yet a salient feature in the narrative that the ark gradually ascends heavenward, from the moment of its being lifted so that it rose upon the waters until those waters covered the highest mountains under the heavens, finally resting upon one of the mountains of Ararat (prop. 6).¹⁸² 7.17b offers three “pictures” of progressive movement: the waters increased – lifted the ark – so that it was high above the earth.¹⁸³ The ark, further, serves as a link between the old cosmos that was destroyed and the new creation (prop. 10). Within a cosmos of utter death and destruction, the outpouring of life from the ark, as all the animals and birds and creepers along with Noah and his household emerge, may be linked with the fecundating waters of life that pour out from the temple, the abundance and prosperity connected with it (props. 3, 8b). More directly, the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers lie in the Ararat region¹⁸⁴ so that there might be a subtle reference to Gen 2.14 in “one of the mountains of Ararat” (8.4). That humanity and all living creatures spread out from the ark to cover the earth also gives the ark a cosmic orientation (prop. 5). This emanation of life into the world further defines the ark as the *omphalos* or *umbilicus mundi* (props. 1, 2, 4). Noah’s building an altar and offering up a sacrifice also links the ark with temple ideology (prop. 14), along with God’s benediction and covenant (props. 12, 13). Furthermore, Holloway’s double expansion of Lundquist’s third proposition, that the temple is founded upon the chaos waters, the *apsû*, as a ritual guard against them, and that the world is recreated every year by agency of the temple whose activities serve to define the primordial and liturgical New Year also find resonance with the deluge narrative.¹⁸⁵ “This association of the temple with the control of water and the forces of chaos goes back to earliest

Navel of the Earth (Amsterdam: J. Muller, 1916) 13-16; P. Schäfer, “Tempel und Schöpfung,” pp 122-133 in *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums*, P. Schäfer (Leiden: Brill, 1978) 123f.

¹⁸² Cf. A. Wiercinski, “Pyramids and Ziggurats,” 73-76. The Egyptian term for Pyramid *M(e)r*, Wiercinski points out, may be defined as an “instrument or a place to ascend.”

¹⁸³ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 438. He discusses here the “strong” effect of this “majestic” sentence.

¹⁸⁴ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 57.

¹⁸⁵ These are listed as Holloway’s own props. 2a and 2b (S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 332-33).

times.”¹⁸⁶ It has already been noted how the flood waters receded from the land of the new creation on New Year’s Day (Gen 8.13), paralleled by the dedication of the tabernacle (Ex 40.2), and later by that of the Solomonic temple (1Kings 8.2, 65). However, regarding the *apsû*, what Holloway notes about the Gilgamesh narrative is true also of the ark of Genesis: “the ark, built to the specifications of the god Ea to sail over the *apsû*, the chaos waters, met the criteria for the sacral locus of all ziggurats, i.e., it was founded upon the *apsû*”¹⁸⁷—thus, satisfying Lundquist’s prop. 4. To be sure, the language of 7.18, echoing Gen 1.2, is striking and, in all likelihood, intended to parallel the מְחַיֵּה הַמָּוֶת -controlling Wind with the ark. H.A.J. Kruger sees further significance:

[A]ccording to ancient myth...a stone or some plug was placed over the waters below (the “deep”). The removal of this plug would result in the waters of the abyss rising and flooding the earth. ...In mythical literature this “stopper” was portrayed as a cubic object, and sometimes as an “ark.” Noah’s ark probably had a definite role to play in bringing the flood to an end. The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat and the waters subsided. Thus, initially the waters subsided when God created heaven and earth. Subsequently, the flood threatened creation. All the fountains of the great deep burst forth (Gen 7.11; 8.2). Eventually, when the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (8.4), the threat of the waters from the deep was reversed once again (8.1b-3). Thus, a subtle interaction is created between the ark which came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, posing as a “plug,” and the subsequent abating of the waters. It would seem that the ark played a double role, serving both as a seal against the waters from the deep surging upwards, and as a refuge for Noah (and his family). The ark in its function as a “stopper,” or “plug” reversed the flood.¹⁸⁸

While the text of Genesis, to be sure, emphasizes God as sovereign “water-controller,” and the abating of the waters as a result of divine faithfulness (8.1), yet the sequence Kruger brings out allows for a possible artistic and subtle portrayal of the ark as “stopper” in as much as the temple, being founded upon the *apsû*, serves such a function. So, too, Holloway:

The arks [of Gilgamesh and Genesis], together with the mountains upon which they rest, are therefore “primordial hillocks.” The death-dealing chaos waters upon which temples are founded and arks float are

¹⁸⁶ M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008) 19.

¹⁸⁷ S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 343. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 285.

¹⁸⁸ H.A.J. Kruger, “Subscripts to Creation: A Few Exegetical Comments on the Literary Device of Repetition in Gen 1-11,” pp 429-46 in *Studies in the Book of Genesis*, A. Wénin, ed. (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) 438-39. Cf. M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven*, 18-19.

“healed” by the transformative functions inherent in any vital temple center. These are transmuted into Waters of Life, symbolized by the divinely nurtured “seed of all living” streaming away from the arks.¹⁸⁹

Certainly, one may observe the “peculiar rhetorical effect” of the ark’s coming to rest upon the mount in 8.4—the last three words of the eleven-word sentence modifying the first, stretching the thought out until it lands with a creak and a bump (עַל הָרֵי אֲרָרָט *‘al hārê ʾārāṭ*)—and assume emphatic significance beyond the play.¹⁹⁰ Further, that resting of the ark is surrounded by receding waters:¹⁹¹

8.3: And the waters returned from the earth...

8.4: And the Ark rested...on one of the mountains of Ararat.

8.5: And the waters steadily decreased...

Finally, Noah likely offers the sacrifice to YHWH within the vicinity of the ark (prop. 14). Gen 8.19 ends, in fact, with “the ark”/ הַתֵּבָה, and v 20 immediately begins with the Noah’s building the altar: וַיִּבֶן נֹחַ מִזְבֵּחַ.

CONCLUSION

Thus, and according to my literary outline delineating the ark as a temple/ micro-cosmos, the ark provides an exodus out of the chaos of death and entrance into the birth of a new cosmos, this significance having implications for Israel’s understanding of the tabernacle (and later temple). By considering the ark in light of (1) parallels to the tabernacle construction, (2) comparative literature, (3) cosmos analogy, (4) paradisiacal portrayal, and (5) temple functions, the salvation of Noah indeed appears to have been by means of a divinely instituted temple, through “the construction of the ark-temple.”¹⁹² Westermann, too, noted the “profound meaning” of the parallel between the ark and the tabernacle: “P looks to the Tabernacle, the place where Yahweh meets his people, as the goal of the history which begins with the covenant with Abraham and

¹⁸⁹ S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 352.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 36.

¹⁹¹ Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 144.

¹⁹² M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 81.

extends to the erection of the sanctuary in Jerusalem.”¹⁹³ This is in keeping with Sailhamer’s insight that the attention of the author of the deluge narrative is focused upon the ark, not the waters.¹⁹⁴

III. FOR WORSHIP: WHO SHALL ASCEND?

As the righteous man, Noah not only passes through the פֶּתַח *petah* of the ark sanctuary, but is able to approach the mount of YHWH for worship. Thus the ark comes to rest (וַיָּנַח) upon one of the mountains of Ararat (הַרֵי אֲרָרָט), where upon Noah builds an altar to YHWH and offers a “restful”(הַנִּיחָה)-smelling burnt offering (8.4, 20-1)—worship, then, being the climax of the re-creation, for the “first thing Noah does is to engage in worship.”¹⁹⁵ Toward understanding the significance of this worship, we will consider Noah as the righteous man, the gate liturgy with reference to the ark’s entrance, and then the altar and sacrifice in relation to its effect upon the deity.

A. Noah as “The Righteous Man”

Because “righteousness” (צֶדֶק *sedeq*), as discussed in the introductory chapter, is the prerequisite for ascending the holy mountain of God, it is good for us to consider how deliberately the present story attributes this characteristic to Noah. The righteousness of Noah is emphatic in the deluge narrative. As the “paragon of righteousness,”¹⁹⁶ his righteousness is commemorated in the subsequent Scripture of both the old (Ezek 14.14, 20) and new (Heb 11.7) covenants. Indeed, Noah is the “preacher of righteousness” (2 Pet 2.5). Jewish literature as well: *Sirach* (44.7), *Jubilees* (5.19), *Wisdom of Solomon* (10.4), *1 Enoch* (67.1)—each marks his righteousness as the

¹⁹³ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 421.

¹⁹⁴ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 118.

¹⁹⁵ V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 307.

¹⁹⁶ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 154; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 356.

central point of the Noah narrative. In fact, the history of interpretation, both Jewish and Christian, so reflects Noah's righteousness as a dominant motif, the terms "righteous" or "righteousness" almost always appear in the same context as the name "Noah."¹⁹⁷ Structurally, the statement of Noah's righteousness in Gen 6.9 is the midpoint or "focus" of the Primeval History, upon which the cycle of 1.1-11.26 hinges.¹⁹⁸ Being the first man called "righteous," and this at a transitional verse,¹⁹⁹ he stands as the archetypal righteous man.²⁰⁰ His particular righteousness is stressed by contrast with "his generations" (בְּרֵאשִׁיתוֹ), with "the earth" (הָאָרֶץ), with "all flesh" (כָּל-בָּשָׂר) that had destroyed (הִשְׁחִיתָ) its way on the earth as the singular exception (6.9, 12).²⁰¹ Indeed, in a literary mirror to Noah's life amidst the wicked, form following substance, Noah (6.8-10) is sandwiched amidst two descriptions of the wickedness of

¹⁹⁷ Cf. J.C. VanderKam, "The Righteousness of Noah," pp 13-32 in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (Chico, CA: SBL, 1980); J.P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), wherein Noah's exemplary righteousness is a major focus. Source critics, dividing the Flood narrative primarily between J and P, nevertheless note the common "righteousness theme" shared by both, e.g., P's 6.9 and J's 7.1 (cf. W.M. Clark, "The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History," 186-87).

¹⁹⁸ G.A. Rendsburg, *The Redaction of Genesis*, 23. Rendsburg explains: "Everything from 1.1-6.8 shows the gradual trend from *tôb*, 'good' (1.4), to *ra'*, 'bad' (6.5), culminating with the hope personified by Noah (6.8). It will be Noah with whom God makes the covenant. Everything from 6.9-11.26 repeats the first sequence, showing the trend from *saddîq*, 'righteous' (6.9) to *yaz'mû*, 'devising evil' (11.6), culminating in the hope personified by Abra(ha)m (11.26). It will be Abra(ha)m with whom God makes another covenant" (23).

¹⁹⁹ Cf. B.W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis," 33; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 411-12.

²⁰⁰ Lexical and thematic links (some of which are developed in this chapter) portray Noah as a new Adam and Enoch, and a type of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, beyond more general characterizations as prophet, priest, and king. In relation to kingship, e.g., W.M. Clark sees Noah within the context of election ideology as "Yahweh's *saddîq*," the basic function of an ANE king being to preserve world order ("The Righteousness of Noah," 277-78). ANE parallels (Ziusudra in the Sumerian account; Utnapishtim in Gilgamesh) promote viewing the Flood hero as a king (cf. also W.M. Clark, "The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History"; M.E.L. Mallowan, "Noah's Flood Reconsidered," 70; A.S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings," *Orientalia* 32 [1963] 56-62). Kingship ideology may include the idea of primordial man abiding on the cosmic mountain (cf. J. van Seters, "The Creation of Man and the Creation of the King," *ZAW* 101 [1989] 333-42), developed messianically in Pss 2, 110, etc., and probably relates theologically to Adam's original "anointing" as prophet, priest, and king.

²⁰¹ G.W. Coats states that the basic structural opposition characterizing the whole story is righteous Noah versus the corrupt and violent earth; the first part of the account narrating the destruction of the corrupt and violent earth, the second part its recreation with righteous Noah (*Genesis*, 76-77). Cf. also W.J. Dumbrell, *Covenant & Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 13-15.

the earth (6.5-7 and 6.11-12). Wenham posits a rough palistrophe in 6.5-8 that also contrasts Noah with the rest of mankind (A//A'):²⁰²

- A The LORD sees mankind, 6.5
- B The LORD regrets, 6.6
- C The LORD says "I shall wipe out," 6.7
- B' because I regret
- A' The LORD sees Noah, 6.8

More explicitly, Noah's "righteousness" is contrasted to the earth's "destruction" in the following chiasmus, also by Wenham:²⁰³

- 6.9 Noah was righteous...among his contemporaries (בְּדֹרֹתָיו)
- 6.11 The earth was ruined (נִשְׁחָתָה)
- 6.12 God saw the earth was ruined (וַיַּשְׁחָתֶהָ)
- 7.1 The LORD said... "you I have seen are righteous in this generation (בְּדֹרֹךְ)."

Indeed, the key words of 6.5-8 form a paronomastic allusion to the name of Noah (נֹחַ):

"regretted" (נָחַם), 6.6,7 (which meaning is contrasted by its use in 5.29 as "relief, comfort"); "wipe out" (מָחָה), 6.7; and "favor, grace" (חֵן), 6.8²⁰⁴—note here the iconic palindrome: "Noah (נֹחַ) found grace (חֵן)."²⁰⁵ Tying the finding of grace to Noah's name makes for an interesting parallel with the Gilgamesh epic where Utnapishtim's name means "I have found life."²⁰⁶ While the ironic wordplay on Noah's name between 5.29 and 6.6, 7 serves as contrast, the rest of the

²⁰² G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 136.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 176. If valid, this chiasmus interweaves with the tight palistrophe noted by McEvenue (*The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 29, 41):

- A the earth became corrupted before God (11a)
- B the earth was filled with violence (11b)
- C all flesh has corrupted (12b)
- C' the end of all flesh is coming (13a)
- B' the earth was filled with violence (13a)
- A' about to "corrupt" the earth before them (13b)

Cf. B. Waltke (*Genesis*, 122) who, regarding 6.9b-12 as "Frame 1" of the narrative, posits the contrast as Noah and his family (vv 9b-10) versus the corrupt earth (vv 11-12).

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 137, 145; H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," *JBL* 114.1 (1995) esp. pp 24-28; F. Polak, "'The Restful Waters of Noah': מִי נֹחַ--מִי מְנוּחָה," *JANES* 23 (1995) 69-74 (71).

²⁰⁵ H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," 26; E. van Wolde, "A Text-Semantics Study," 24-26.

²⁰⁶ Cf. R.E. Simoons-Vermeer, "The Mesopotamian Floodstories," 22.

wordplays build upon the birth etymology—from 6.8 (חַן) to 8.4 (וְחֵנָּח) and 8.9 (חֵנוּחַ), reaching fulfillment in YHWH’s smelling a “restful smell” in 8.21, replete with poetic assonance:

וַיֵּרַח יְהוָה אֶת-רִיחַ הַנְּחִיחַ. Some have also detected in Noah’s name (נֹחַ), the echo of Enoch’s (חֵנוּחַ), an allusion made unmistakable in 6.9 (cf. 5.22, 24).²⁰⁷ Among other things, the allusion serves to accentuate Noah’s righteousness, in its recall, not merely of Enoch, but of the theologically significant genealogical line (especially so in contrast to Cain’s).²⁰⁸

Particularly in the unit of 6.9-12, the righteousness of Noah, נֹחַ named four times, appears deliberately contrasted with the wickedness of the earth, הָאָרֶץ also being stated four times.²⁰⁹ Brought into sharp focus by this contrast, the righteousness of Noah is then telescoped, given explicit four-fold, escalating²¹⁰ emphasis in lines utilizing echo, repetition, and *taw-aleph* linking,²¹¹ 6.9b-d, 10.²¹²

Noah was a righteous man,
 נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק
 unblemished was he in his generations
 תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדוֹרֹתָיו
 – with God Noah walked.
 אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים הִתְהַלֵּךְ-נֹחַ
 And Noah bore three sons....
 וַיּוֹלֶד נֹחַ שְׁלֹשָׁה בָּנִים

²⁰⁷ Cf. S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 39. Noah echoes Enoch and foreshadows Abraham (17.1).
²⁰⁸ Cf. D.T. Bryan, “A Reevaluation of Gen 4 and 5 in Light of Recent Studies in Genealogical Fluidity,” *ZAW* 99.2 (1987) 180-88.
²⁰⁹ Righteousness “often stands in contrast to the wicked” (G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 169). “This opening section [6.9-12] contrasts Noah’s ‘righteousness’ with the ‘violence’ of ‘all flesh.’” (J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 124).
²¹⁰ Cf. G.J. Wenham who speaks of a “progressive build-up in Noah’s characterization” (*Genesis 1-15*, 170). B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 123: “Thus, the narrator explicitly and forcefully characterizes Noah in the very first words of the act, escalating his godly virtues from “righteous” to “blameless” to his highest accolade, ‘he walked with God.’”
²¹¹ Cf. S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 40-41.
²¹² I am following “most commentators ancient and modern” in understanding 9b and 9c as two clauses (cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 169; R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 241). However even if the “perfectly righteous” translation were preferred, the adverb may still be accounted as adding emphasis so that it remains a four-fold one.

Gen 6.9b-d forms a ten-word sentence, highlighting Noah's being the tenth generation since creation (Adam), that begins and ends with "Noah."²¹³ Gen 6.9b is the Pentateuch's first use of "righteous" (צַדִּיק) which, in legal contexts—and such is the river ordeal concept—means "innocent" or "acquitted."²¹⁴ The term has its origin in legal terminology, implying that one is judged to be in the right, or whose conduct is deemed right by the divine Judge.²¹⁵ That this righteousness is *the* reason God delivered Noah and his household from the deluge waters is made explicit and central in 7.1: "And YHWH said to Noah, 'Enter, you and all your household, into the ark for you are the one I have seen righteous (צַדִּיק) before Me in this generation.'"²¹⁶ Noah is singled out in the direct speech three times (one pronoun and two pronominal suffixes), singled out for salvation, and the reason: because (כִּי) he is *righteous*. The didactic principle seems clear: only the righteous will be delivered through the waters to the holy mount. "The main purpose of the story of the Flood," writes Sailhamer, "is not to show why God sent a flood but rather to show why God saved Noah."²¹⁷ "Stress is laid not on the sinful generation, but on the one *ṣaddîq*."²¹⁸ This central purpose, as Westermann indicates, is rooted in God's covenant

²¹³ J.M. Sasson, "Word-Play in Gen 6.8-9," *CBQ* 37.2 (1975) 165-66; V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17*, 277.

²¹⁴ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 169; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 414; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 357-58; W.E. Read, "Further Observations on *ṢĀDAQ*" *AUSS* 4 (1996) 29-36.

²¹⁵ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 50. Noah's righteousness is likely a "cultic righteousness" based on a covenant relationship with YHWH, cf. G. von Rad, "'Righteousness' and 'Life' in the Cultic Language of the Psalms," pp 243-66 in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, E.W. Trueman Dicken, trans. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966).

²¹⁶ Cf. M. Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 79: "...this righteousness of Noah is declared to be the ground for granting to him salvation from judgment and inheritance of the kingdom in the ark."

²¹⁷ J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 124; *ibid.*, *Genesis*, 118.

²¹⁸ Y.T. Radday, "Chiasmus in Hebrew Biblical Narrative," pp 50-117 in *Chiasmus in Antiquity*, J.W. Welch, ed. (Provo, UT: Research Press, 1981) 100. 1 Peter 2.4-10, as an example of first century apostolic exegesis, also brings out God's ability to deliver the few righteous ("Noah, the preacher of righteousness [δικαιοσύνης]; "righteous [δίκαιον] Lot...that righteous [δίκαιος] man...his righteous [δικαίαν] soul") while condemning "the old world [κόσμου]," the "world of the ungodly [κόσμῳ ἄσεβῶν]," and the "cities of Sodom and Gomorrah." W.M. Clark, noting similarities between the Flood and Sodom stories, states that the question of righteousness is central to both ("The Flood and the Structure of Pre-patriarchal History," 195). Cf. H.H. Schmid, "Creation, Righteousness, and Salvation: 'Creation Theology' as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology," pp 102-117 in *Creation in the Old*

(בְּרִיָּה), its first usage in Scripture found in 6.18.²¹⁹ In 6.9c, Noah is called “unblemished” or “blameless” (תָּמִים *tāmîm*)—this, as with “righteous,” being the term’s first instance in the Bible. Most frequently used to describe unblemished (and thus approved of God) sacrificial animals (Leviticus 1.3, 10, etc.), תָּמִים is rarely applied to people as here.²²⁰ While “righteous” is used in a legal context, “blameless” is a cultic context,²²¹ both, significantly, converging upon Noah within a narrative both legal and cultic—these were not likely to be rigidly disconnected in the ANE milieu. Wenham notes that “blamelessness” is the prerequisite for close fellowship with God, Ps 15.1-2 declaring that only the blameless may dwell in God’s holy hill,²²² and this very significant point will be developed below. Pairing “righteous” with “blameless” signifies an absolute commitment to righteousness.²²³ 6.9d defines Noah’s righteousness and unblemishedness more concretely with the phrase “—with God Noah walked.” The inversion of the Hebrew (הִתְהַלֵּךְ-נֹחַ *hiṭhallek-nōaḥ*) whereby “Noah” ends the sentence that began with “Noah,” serves to emphasize him as a character.²²⁴ While Adam had walked with God in the midst of the paradisiacal garden (3.8), Noah walks with God amidst a crooked and perverse generation. הֶאֱלֹהִים fronting the verb, Noah’s dependence upon God is emphasized,²²⁵ accentuating also that the “standards by which Noah’s righteousness is judged are divine, not human.”²²⁶ Interestingly, blamelessness is utilized adjectivally in Ps 119.1 with reference to walk: “How blessed are those

Testament, B.W. Anderson, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984; originally published in *ZTK* 70 [1973] 1-19) for the relation of salvation and righteousness to creation theology.

²¹⁹ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 421-22.

²²⁰ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170; N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 50.

²²¹ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 414; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 358.

²²² G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170.

²²³ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 133. Waltke references Deut 32.4; Ps 18.30; 19.7-8.

²²⁴ E. Noort, “Stories of the Great Flood,” 27-28. “Noah” constitutes a focus, even if only for a pragmatic function (cf. K. Shimasaki, *Focus Structure in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of Word Order and Information Structure* [Bethesda: CDL Press, 2002] 182-83, and R.D. Holmstedt’s critique of Shimasaki’s work, “Adjusting Our Focus,” *Hebrew Studies* 44 [2003] 203-15).

²²⁵ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 358.

²²⁶ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 50.

whose walk is blameless, who walk according to the Torah of YHWH.”²²⁷ Perhaps, then, “walking with God” has reference here to walking according to the Torah of God. To be sure, Noah’s exacting obedience to the commands of God, likened to the precision carried out for the construction of the tabernacle, is a pedagogical point in the narrative. In any case, Noah’s walking with God is contrasted with the all flesh of 6.12 which had destroyed its (or *his*, i.e., God’s?) “way” (דֶּרֶךְ) upon the earth. Noted by many commentators,²²⁸ there is also here a parallel being drawn with Enoch who walked with God and so was subsequently translated into heaven. “In describing Noah in this way,” Sailhamer notes, “the author intentionally draws a parallel between the deliverance of Noah from the Flood and Enoch’s deliverance from death (5.22-24). The point is clear enough: God delivers those who ‘walk with’ him and who do not ‘corrupt his way.’”²²⁹ Not only is Noah being paralleled to Enoch (הֲנוֹךְ *h^anôk*) thematically in 6.9, but the poetic syntax of the phrase appears to be making a visual allusion to Enoch as well, the last three letters, read backwards, being: *H-N-K*.²³⁰ Next, the statement of Noah’s begetting three sons in 6.10 also confirms, albeit subtly, Noah’s righteousness (cf. Job 1.2; 42.13; Pss 127, 128).²³¹ Finally, 6.22 highlights his righteousness by the rare and emphatic statement of Noah’s exacting obedience, such a formula paralleled by the construction of the tabernacle.²³² Given the other creation vocabulary in the deluge narrative, the use of the word כֵּן *kēn* may be a deliberate

²²⁷ אֲשֶׁר־יִחְסִי־דָרֶךְ הַחַיִּים בְּחֹרֶת יְהוָה:

²²⁸ E.g., U. Cassuto, *Genesis II*, 50; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170; J. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 124; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 358-59.

²²⁹ J. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 124.

²³⁰ J.M. Sasson, “Word-Play in Gen 6.8-9,” 166.

²³¹ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170. Wenham also notes that having three sons links Noah with “Adam and Terah (Gen 4.1-2, 25; 11.27), who also fathered three sons and stand at turning points of history” (170). Cf. also M. Kline’s proposal that the sons were born by divine intervention, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 80.

²³² *Ibid.*, 176. Wenham also notes that verbal allusions to the Creation account suggest Noah is more like God than like Adam. B. Jacob notes that God had only “said” in v 13, but Noah, taking it as a command, is thus praised in v 22 for his obedience (*Genesis*, 50). Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 53.

echo of creation's irresistible obedience to the divine word (1.7, 9, 11, 15, 24).²³³ If YHWH's command to build the ark is a test of faith (i.e., to build an ark before the coming deluge is revealed), as von Rad plausibly suggests by comparing the account to the test of Abraham, then his obedience is being magnified all the more.²³⁴ Noah's faithfulness is stressed in the Hebrew of 6.22 by a chiasm: *וַיַּעַשׂ נֹחַ ... כִּן עָשָׂה*.²³⁵ Upon entrance into the ark obedience is further stressed through use of an inclusion, 7.5a, 7.9b.²³⁶ These reports on Noah's obedience, tied to the building and entering of the ark, serve as a key didactic refrain, keeping Noah's righteousness in view.²³⁷ The parallel phrasing of Noah's obedience to God's command for exiting the ark (8.16-17//18-19) also illustrates his minute obedience.²³⁸ Furthermore, it may be postulated that Noah's differentiating between clean and unclean animals,²³⁹ altar-building and sacrifice, and Sabbath observance contribute to his righteous obedience,²⁴⁰ as well as his overall concern and care for the animals.²⁴¹ As a last point, his righteousness is not only stressed by

²³³ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 369.

²³⁴ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 120. From a Source-critical perspective, von Rad states that while P asserts Noah's righteousness, the Yahwist demonstrates it by Noah's obedience.

²³⁵ Cf. V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 285.

²³⁶ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 28, 33.

²³⁷ Cf. B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 124, 131.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 141. That obedience is also notable in Noah's not exiting the Ark until commanded by God to do so. Thus Calvin states: "How great must have been the fortitude of the man, who, after the incredible weariness of a whole year, when the deluge has ceased, and new life has shown forth, does not yet move a foot out of his sepulcher, without the command of God" (Calvin, *Genesis*, 280). So, too, B. Jacob notes: "It is generally assumed Noah sends forth the birds to discover whether the earth is dry so that he can disembark. Noah however will not disembark until told by God; Noah is not impatient" (*Genesis*, 57).

²³⁹ See, e.g., P.J. Budd, "Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel," *VT* 23.1 (1973) 4. B.S. Childs (*Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985] 153) refers to the role of the priest as having to do primarily with guarding God's will to separate the clean and the unclean. Cf. R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993) 20ff, 36, notes this distinguishing between clean and unclean as one of the principle functions of a priest.

²⁴⁰ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 177.

²⁴¹ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 124. The narrative certainly marks out Noah's care, e.g., of the dove (8.9), the description of which John Skinner called "unsurpassed...for tenderness and beauty of imagination" (*A Critical Commentary on the Book of Genesis* [2nd ed.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930] 156). So, too, von Rad marks how the dove's return is "described with great affection; the narrator's eye lingers on every movement" (*Genesis*, 121).

contrast with “all the earth,” but also by the deliberate suppression of any statement concerning the righteousness of Noah’s family.²⁴²

B. *The Gate Liturgy*

Setting the narrative within the context of cosmic mountain ideology, Noah may be viewed, as was Adam in Gen 1-3, as a priest.²⁴³ Not only by his association with the sanctuary symbolized by the ark, but also in his distinguishing between the clean and unclean animals (7.2),²⁴⁴ his sabbatical agenda (8.10, 12),²⁴⁵ and, perhaps chiefly,²⁴⁶ in his offering up of the burnt offering to YHWH,²⁴⁷ Noah is portrayed as a priest. The priest is the righteous man who may draw near to God, so that we are hereby brought back to the idea of the “gate liturgy.”

Is the concept of the gate liturgy to be found in the deluge narrative? Broadly, and in as much as it may be related to the river ordeal,²⁴⁸ the idea that only the righteous man may “enter” is certainly present. Righteousness, in the ancient Near East, was associated with the primeval

²⁴² Cf. J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 311.

²⁴³ *Jubilees*, expanding upon the Genesis narrative, adds many priestly features, touches, and functions to portray Noah chiefly as a priest. Cf. J.C. Vanderkam, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 19-23.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Lev 10.10, 11.1-47. Kline notes: “That the ark was a sanctuary, a holy theocratic formation, and its occupants a holy nation, a kingdom of priests, is also evidenced by the introduction of the clean-unclean distinction in the regulations governing the gathering of animals and birds into it (Gen 7.2, 3). Elsewhere this distinction appears again in the Israelite theocracy in connection with dietary rules” (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 88). Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 54.

²⁴⁵ Compare to the priestly regulations, Lev 12.2, 13.4-5, 21, 26, 31-33, 50-54, etc.

²⁴⁶ J.R. Davila (“The Flood Hero as King and Priest” *JNES* 54.3 [1995] 199-214) isolates the sacrifice as the “faint echo [in the J source] of the Flood hero’s priestly status in Mesopotamia” (208), and finds that in ANE parallel Flood stories the hero was most likely a priest. Cf. also A.S. Kapelrud, “Temple Building, a Task for Gods and Kings,” 56-62. Kapelrud highlights that temple builders were kings under the god-king, but also served as the high priest for that god-king.

²⁴⁷ For a brief discussion on viewing the sacrifice as propitiatory versus as a thank-offering, cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 189-90. Kline refers to this priestly duty as a consecration of the world to God (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 91).

²⁴⁸ An interesting parallel is in a Nungal hymn of Sumer, where the temple is called “Ilurugu-house which does not kill the upright (while) sorting (out) the evil” (T.-S. Frymer-Kensky, *The Judicial Ordeal in the Ancient Near East*, 538).

mound, being the foundation of the earth (and thus of the king's throne),²⁴⁹ and so may be paralleled with the biblical cosmic mountain imagery of Gen 2-3. And even as Adam's disobedience caused him to be expelled through the cherubim-guarded "gates," so Noah's careful and complete obedience is here emphasized as a display of his righteousness, enabling him "to enter." Viewing the ark as a kind of temple, moreover, and recalling that the temple is an architectural cosmic mountain, a full-orbed gate liturgy comes into focus.

1. THE DOORWAY OF THE ARK

Part of the divinely revealed instructions for the ark include setting "the entrance of the ark" (פֶּתַח הַתֵּבָה) on its side (6.16), a feature emphasized in as much as it is fronted before the verb:²⁵⁰

וּפֶתַח הַתֵּבָה בְּצִדָּהּ הָיָה

The doorway is mentioned in 6.16 "because entering and leaving the ark is *central* to the subsequent narrative (cf. 7.16)."²⁵¹ It is the text itself, in other words, that sets the door at center stage. The deliverance from the deluge waters, and establishing of the covenant, is then described with particular reference to entering the ark in v 18: "But I will confirm My covenant with you and you will enter (בָּאֵת) the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." The term בָּא *bô'* is used 14 times in the narrative (6.9-9.17), the first pair of uses rather

²⁴⁹ In Egypt, e.g., the symbol for the throne dais in the Ramesside period was *m3't*, standing for "righteousness" and representing the "Primeval Mound." Cf. S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 87; *idem.*, "He Who Builds His Stairs into Heaven..." (Amos 9.6a)" *UF* 25 (1993) 319-25; L. Jacobs, "Jewish Cosmology," 73. See Pss 9.9; 97.2; Prov 10.25; 16.12; 20.28. Kingship, as the highest authority, was often associated with justice/righteousness in the ANE and in the Bible, royal symbols becoming symbols of justice so that the throne was identified with the administration of justice (i.e., the throne "of justice") and the hall as a court of law (1 Ki 3.9; 7.7) (Z. Falk, *Hebrew Law in Biblical Times*, 2nd ed. [Provo, UT: BYU Press, 2001] 50; *idem.*, "Two Symbols of Justice," *VT* 10.1 [1960] 72-4). The implications, having Cosmic Mountain ideology in mind, are that the mount, being the deity's throne, is necessarily a mount of justice/righteousness, the waters being the "court," whereby those who approach are tried by ordeal. "Kingship, justice, wisdom and other institutions were to a greater or lesser extent, whether explicitly or implicitly, based on creation" (S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment*, 19).

²⁵⁰ Cf. B. Rocine, *Learning Biblical Hebrew: A New Approach Using Discourse Analysis* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 21 (fn 2); 23 (fn 1, 2), 24, 28; K. Shimasaki, *Focus Structure in Biblical Hebrew*, 191-92.

²⁵¹ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 174 (emphasis added). Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 421; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 365.

ironic: “The end of all flesh has *come* before Me” (6.13) and “I Myself am ready to *bring* the deluge of waters upon the earth” (6.17). All other uses have reference to entering the ark (cf. 6.18, 6.19, 6.20, 7.1, 7.7, 7.9, 7.13, 7.15, 7.16 [2x], 8.9, 8.11). Such a proliferation of “entrances,” and these in relation to the temple-like ark, may at least cause one to suspect an entrance liturgy ideal at work.²⁵² Indeed, both the entering and exiting of the ark are elaborately emphasized, paralleling each other by the fourfold repetitions of בוא (7.13-16)²⁵³ and of יצא (8.16-19):²⁵⁴

EXIT – Genesis 8.16-19

A	¹⁶ <i>Go out (יצא) from the ark,</i>	A'	¹⁸ <i>So Noah went out (יִצֵא),</i>
B	<i>you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.</i>	B'	<i>and his sons and his wife and his son's wives with him.</i>
C	¹⁷ <i>All living creatures that are with you, from all flesh: of birds and of all animals and of all creepers that creep upon the earth,</i>	C'	¹⁹ <i>All living creatures, all creepers, all birds, whatever creeps upon the earth, according to their families,</i>
D	<i>bring them out (וְיֵצֵאוּ) with you</i>	D'	<i>they went out (יִצֵאוּ) from the ark</i>
E	<i>so they may swarm in the earth and be fruitful and multiply upon the earth.</i>		

²⁵² M. Kline, whose (over-lapping) study regards eschatological “har-magedon” typology, notes the emphasis on “redemptive gathering”: “In the days of Noah the ark was the refuge into which the remnant people were gathered. This theme of gathering into the ark is given great prominence in the composition of the Flood narrative. It is the theme of the second of the seven concentrically arranged sections of the account (Gen 7.1-5) and it is recapitulated at the beginning of both the third section on the flood proper (Gen 7.6-12) and the fourth section on the prevailing of the judgment waters (Gen 7.13-24). This triple mention of the gathering is indicative of its importance in the Flood judgment seen as a redemptive act. That the Lord himself is the Gatherer-Harvester is manifested by the fact that the entry of the remnant people into the ark was sealed by his act of securing them within the sanctuary place of refuge (Gen 7.16)” (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 87).

²⁵³ “The sentence structure is dominated by a single verb that occurs four times: ‘They went in’ 13, 15, 16. Apart from this, there is only one other finite verb, in the last sentence: God has ‘commanded’ it” (Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 436). NOTE: My structural outline, by including vv 6-12, adds two more occurrences of בוא (vv 7, 9).

²⁵⁴ “By highlighting this particular verb, the author emphasizes the departure from the ark” (V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 307).

ENTRANCE – Genesis 7.6-16²⁵⁵

A	⁶ Now Noah was a son of six hundred years	A'	¹⁰ And it happened after seven days (¹¹ In the sixth hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month of the seventeenth day of the month, on that precise day –)
B	when the deluge came, the waters upon the earth.	B'	the waters of the deluge came upon the earth. all the fountains of the great deep were burst asunder, and the windows of heaven were opened. ¹² And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.
C	⁷ So Noah entered (יָבֹא) –and his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him– into the ark, from the face of the waters of the deluge.	C'	¹³ On this same day, Noah entered (יָבֹא), and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark,
D	⁸ From the clean animals and from the animals that are not clean and from the birds, and from all that creep upon the earth,	D'	¹⁴ they and all wildlife according to their kind, and all herd-animals after their kind, and all creepers that creep upon the earth after their kind, and all birds according to their kind: all little birds and all winged creatures.
E	⁹ two by two they entered (יָבֹאוּ) to Noah into the ark, male and female,	E'	¹⁵ And they entered (יָבֹאוּ) to Noah into the ark, two by two, from all flesh that has the breath of life within. ¹⁶ And those that entered (יָבֹאוּ) were male and female of all flesh;
F	just as God commanded Noah.	F'	they entered (יָבֹאוּ) just as God had commanded him –now YHWH shut him in.

The central account of entering the ark, 7.13-16, has been noted by scholars for its expansive detail and “festive tone,”²⁵⁶ giving it a dominating role.²⁵⁷ Indeed, the repetition of יָבֹא serves to

²⁵⁵ This is based on Wenham's outline, *Genesis 1-15*, 177. Cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 431. R.E. Longacre (“The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 247) suggests a broad chiasmus: Yahweh (7.1-5) – Noah (7.6-10) – Noah (7.11-16a) – Yahweh (7.16b), which I have worked out in more detail:

A LORD/ enter (7.1)

B delineation of animals (7.2-3)

C rain on the earth/ forty days and forty nights (7.4)

D LORD commanded him/ Noah was six hundred years old (7.5-6)

E Noah with his sons, his wife, his sons' wives, enter ark (7.7)

E' clean and not-clean animals, by pairs, enter ark to Noah (7.8-9a)

D' God had commanded Noah/ six hundredth year of Noah's life (7.9b-11)

C' rain on the earth/ forty days and forty nights (7.12)

B' delineation of animals (7.13-14)

A' entered/ LORD (7.15-16)

²⁵⁶ Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 178, 181; S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 62; C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 436; K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11*.26, 370 (Matthews notes insightfully that the embarkation represents the salvation of creation's fifth and sixth days).

²⁵⁷ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 431. He further states, also relevant, that the “studied solemnity” of the entrance into the Ark “lays greater emphasis on God's saving action over against his sentence of destruction”(431); 7.13-16a is “the climax” of the narrative (436). Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 125.

portray entrance into the ark as a great procession.²⁵⁸ To be sure, entering the ark is the only means of refuge and deliverance from judgment. But further, beyond Noah's sole reception of the divine "blueprints," entrance into the ark itself, being discriminatory, also serves to promote a liturgical reading. The ark as temple (cosmic mountain), that is, in temple mythopoeic context, holds promise for unfolding the emphasis.

2. CONDITIONAL ENTRANCE INTO THE ARK

Who shall ascend the hillock of YHWH? In Gen 1-3 Adam must descend and be barred from the gates of Paradise through his disobedience. Here in Gen 7.1, YHWH says to Noah: "Enter (בא), you and all your household, into the ark for (כי) you are the one I have seen righteous (צדיק)²⁵⁹ before me in this generation." Running like an undercurrent through the text is the fundamental question of epic event: Who may enter and so be saved? Thus we find that entrance is (1) by divine prerogative and command alone: בא-אֶפְרָה, and (2) that it is conditioned morally and ethically: כִּי-אַתָּה רָאִיתָ צָדִיק. The second point explains the first—and this is at issue in the narrative: Noah's righteousness is *the* reason why YHWH grants him and his household entrance, that entrance itself being indistinguishable from salvation.²⁶⁰ "I have seen," further, forms a remarkable contrast with 6.5, 12²⁶¹ (also echoed in "this generation"). From the perspective of a cosmic "river ordeal" with God as Judge, destruction and salvation are both fully explained: "for (*kî*) the earth is filled with unrighteousness" (6.13) and "for (*kî*) you are the one I have seen

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 436.

²⁵⁹ For issues concerning the precise nature of this righteousness, cf. W.M. Clark, "The Righteousness of Noah"; C. Westermann's brief review (*Genesis 1-11*, 426-27). Even if one takes, with Clark (274), the כִּי *kî* as promissory rather than causal, "righteousness" is still the emphatic prerequisite of entry.

²⁶⁰ K.A. Matthews, similarly, states: "the Lord explains that Noah's moral conduct is the reason he and his family are preserved" (*Genesis 1-11.26*, 357).

²⁶¹ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 137.

righteous” (7.1).²⁶² We return now to Wenham’s insight regarding the “blamelessness” (תָּמִים *tāmîm*) of Noah being a “prerequisite for close fellowship with God” and its correspondence with Ps 15.1-2,²⁶³ considered by Koch the clearest example of a temple entrance liturgy:²⁶⁴

YHWH, who may dwell in Your tent, who may tabernacle on Your holy mount?
Whoever’s walk is blameless (תָּמִים), whoever’s deeds are righteous (צַדִּיק)....

The holiness of YHWH and his dwelling taken for granted, emphasis rather is focused upon the entrance liturgy—upon the repeated interrogative *who* (מִי). Significantly, the deluge narrative begins in 6.9, as if in answer, by ascribing both attributes to Noah:

נֹחַ אִישׁ צַדִּיק תָּמִים הָיָה בְּדֹרֵהוּ

The ark – tabernacle parallels extend, then, beyond their construction to the emphasis placed on the conditionality of their being entered.²⁶⁵ Leviticus 1.3 states only “unblemished” (תָּמִים) animals may be presented, and this at the “entrance” (פֶּתַח) of the tabernacle of meeting before YHWH. As the tabernacle/temple is an architectural cosmic mountain, entrance into the holy of holies symbolizes ascent to the summit of God’s holy mountain—“*who shall ascend?*” may thus, as will be considered in the next chapter, be linked to the Day of Atonement.

Our reading of the deluge narrative, we trust, is not merely original and fresh, but grounded textually. As such, hints and gestures of this reading may be glimpsed in the work of other scholars. Westermann, for example, stated: “One can understand too the studied solemnity [of 7.13-16a]. P portrays here the entrance of the obedient, pious man into the place of salvation or preservation, a very reserved and distant hint of the entrance into the sanctuary, the place of

²⁶² K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 361. Even in the Sodom and Gomorrah parallel, Abraham’s intercession is on the behalf of the righteous.

²⁶³ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 170.

²⁶⁴ K. Koch, “Templeinlassliturgen und Dekaloge,” pp 45-60 in *Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentliche Überlieferungen*, R. Rendtorff, K. Koch, eds. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1961) 46.

²⁶⁵ The conditionality of entrance/doorway bolsters the argument for viewing the ark as symbolizing the tabernacle/temple.

salvation and preservation.”²⁶⁶ Sailhamer also emphasizes the parallels of entry between the ark and tabernacle. However, rather than linking *תְּמִיָּם* with Noah’s character (6.9), he mentions that Noah’s entry into the ark is accompanied by “seven pairs” of every clean animal.²⁶⁷ Of further significance, Hamilton notes the correspondence, all the more remarkable as he is not working under a temple mythopoeic context, between the garden of Eden and the ark:

There is much here reminiscent of Gen 3. Inside the ark parallels inside the garden; outside the ark parallels outside the garden. Inside there is salvation; outside there is not. Inside there is immunity from disaster; outside there is inevitable death.²⁶⁸

Given the analogy between the garden and the holy of holies of the tabernacle/temple, and that between the ark and the tabernacle/temple, Noah’s entrance may be understood as that of a high priest, the “righteous man,” ascending the cosmic mountain of YHWH—an idea “fleshed out,” as it were, when Noah walks the summit of the Ararat mount. The veil or *פֶּרֶקֶת* separating off the holy of holies served as an “objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas,”²⁶⁹ a manifest function of the ark door.

3. NOAH AS THE ENTERER

In every sense, then, Noah is defined as one able “to enter.” The “you” of 7.1 stands at the head of the Hebrew clause emphatically.²⁷⁰ The narrative, further, makes it a point to qualify the other

²⁶⁶ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 436.

²⁶⁷ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 121.

²⁶⁸ V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 295. Hamilton makes another salient comparison: “In one way Noah’s experience at the top of one of the mountains of Ararat is no less frightening and undoing than is that of Moses at the top of Mt. Sinai. Both find themselves at the top of a mountain that is enveloped in either a rainstorm or an electrical storm” (301).

²⁶⁹ F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 33. Gorman refers specifically to the “Mercy Seat,” the *כַּפֶּרֶת*, but the veil actually delineates the separation.

²⁷⁰ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 371.

“entries” as being via Noah.²⁷¹ His household enters precisely because it is *his* household (בֵּיתוֹ), 7.1—*his* sons (בָּנָיו), *his* wife (אִשְׁתּוֹ), and *his* sons’ wives (נְשֵׁי-בָנָיו), they enter with *him* (אִתּוֹ), 7.7.²⁷² Indeed, this delineation is a key expression in the narrative (6.18; 7.7, 13; 8.16; cf. 7.1).²⁷³ Hamilton notes the use of the resumptive pronoun at the end of 6.18 serves to establish Noah as the character of supreme significance in the paragraph.²⁷⁴ The exclusivity of Noah and his household, so as to make Noah the father of a new humanity, may even be considered the most significant distinctive of the Torah’s deluge narrative when compared to the Mesopotamian parallels, even so as to constitute a major theme.²⁷⁵ Even the wildlife enters “to keep alive *with you*” (אִתְּךָ), 6.19, for “everything will come *to you*” (אֵלֶיךָ), 6.20,²⁷⁶ their entrance being specifically “*to Noah* into the ark” (אֶל-נֹחַ), 7.9, 15. This phrase is all the more significant as the construct, the double use of *’el* in asyndeton (with one *’el* referring to a person and the other to a

²⁷¹ Cf. K.A. Matthews (*Genesis 1-11*, 26, 368) who notes how the singular “you” is highlighted throughout the narrative. He further states: “The salvation of the Noahic family is specifically attributed (“because”) to the “righteous” character of the patriarch...The family is secondary at this point [7.1], for it is Noah’s righteousness that means salvation for his dependents” (371). Cf. J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 311. Rabbinic interpretation makes a similar point regarding 8.15 (Cf. W.J. van Bekkum, “The Lesson of the Flood,” 130-31).

²⁷² So too J. Skinner: “The principle involved is the religious solidarity of the families; its members are saved for the righteousness of its head” (*Genesis*, 152). V.P. Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 298) puts it well: “Noah is saved because of Yahweh. And Noah’s family is saved because of Noah.” U. Cassuto: “Only Noah’s name is mentioned, for he is the father of the family and the head of the house (Ibn Ezra)” (*Genesis II*, 100). This household principle is, of course, commonplace in the ANE and in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (cf. J.J. Niehaus, “The Covenantal Household: A Study of the Destruction and Salvation of Households in the Bible and the Ancient Near East,” pp 51-63 in *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline* [Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2000]). In regard to Ezekiel’s understanding of the righteousness of Noah’s sons (Cf. Ezek 14.14-20), Wenham notes: “However, it is certainly Noah’s righteousness on which Genesis concentrates; it is not much interested in his children’s behavior at this point” (*Genesis 1-15*, 170). So, too, McEvenue (*Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 60): “all the living came to the just Noah, to the ark, to be saved. ...the entry is made an occasion to recall Noah’s obedience.” B. Jacob steers a just middle way when he states, “God remembered Noah for the promise had been made to him; the family merely participates in his merit,” yet the “family of Noah is rescued with him for they have been educated by him and are not unworthy” (*Genesis*, 56, 51; emphasis original), for the righteous man is the one who leads his house in righteousness (Gen 18.19; Deut 6.7; Ps 25.10-14). Cf. Gen 8.18-19 where the humans, animals, birds, and creepers all exit the ark “by families.”

²⁷³ Cf. Waltke’s comments (*Genesis*, 136).

²⁷⁴ V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 283-84.

²⁷⁵ N.M. Sarna, *Genesis*, 48. This fatherhood is part Adam typology: Noah is the first born after Adam’s death; both beget three sons, one of who turns out to be degenerate (49-50).

²⁷⁶ Their coming “to you to keep alive” highlights that for the creatures Noah, as mediator, is savior.

place), is rare.²⁷⁷ And yet, it occurs four times in the deluge narrative, every time with Noah and the ark as the two objects harmonized (7.9, 7.15, 8.9 twice).²⁷⁸ Returning to 6.18 one finds God’s covenant with Noah at root: “But I will confirm My covenant with-*you* (אִתְּךָ), and-*you*-will-enter (וְכָל־אֲנִי) the ark—you (אִתְּךָ), and-*your*-sons (וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ), and-*your*-wife (וְאִשְׁתְּךָ), and the wives of *your*-sons (וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ) with-*you* (אִתְּךָ).” Thus there are three clauses, the first and last ending with the emphatic “with *you*” אִתְּךָ.²⁷⁹

וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ אִתְּךָ
וְכָל־אֲנִי אִתְּךָ
אִתְּךָ וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ אִתְּךָ

Entrance into the ark being central (18b), that entrance is by way of covenant with Noah (18a), Noah himself—you (אִתְּךָ)—being defined as inclusive of his household (18c). In 7.1 it is precisely “your household” that replaces v 18’s delineation:²⁸⁰

אִתְּךָ (7.1) וְכָל־בֵּיתְךָ
אִתְּךָ (6.18) וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ אִתְּךָ

A similar relationship is offered in regard to the creatures of the earth, manifest by tracing the three different forms of בָּאֲרָצָה *bā’rāṣā* that tie 6.18-20 into a literary unity.²⁸¹ Noah is told, v 18, “you will enter” (וְכָל־אֲנִי), then, v 19, “you will bring...with you” (וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ וְאִשְׁתְּךָ וְכָל־בְּנֵי־ךָ אִתְּךָ) the *living creatures*, and

²⁷⁷ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 24.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ For the unnecessary “with you” utilized to establish Noah as the thematic participant, cf. R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 243-44.

²⁸⁰ While consigning 6.18 and 7.1 to P and J respectively, S.E. McEvenue yet notes their both having an emphatic *’attā* (*The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 48). Also relevant, McEvenue (51) draws out the chiasmic symmetry in vv 13-21, reflecting the alternating emphasis of the LORD (“I”) and Noah (“you”):

13b *w’hin’ni*
17a *wa’ni*
18b *’attā*
21a *w’attā*

²⁸¹ Cf. S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 49.

then, in order for him to bring them with him, the living creatures, v 20, “will come to you”

(יָבֹאוּ אֵלָיךְ).²⁸² Noah, then, is the “enterer,” the rest being those whom he brings with him.

4. THE DOORWAY BARRED

Finally, and as a corollary to the divine invitation to enter (בֹּא) in 7.1, the entrance is divinely barred in 7.16: “YHWH shut him in” / וַיִּסְגֹּר יְהוָה בְּעֶדְרוֹ. Here, the third masculine singular objective suffix is striking—it was *Noah* whom YHWH shut in, his household and all the living creatures, the remnant cosmos, being delivered “in him.” This “celebrated” sentence, striking in its anthropomorphism, serves “as a final punctuation of the unit,” contrasted by the onset of the deluge in the next unit.²⁸³ YHWH’s shutting the door is highlighted, first, as the climactic conclusion to the unit of 7.6-16, and secondly, by its contrast to Mesopotamian parallels whereby the heroes shut themselves in.²⁸⁴ Here Longacre’s comments are worth quoting:

What do we do, however, with the striking clause, ‘And Yhwh shut him in’ at the end of verse 16? This clause seems to be something special. It represents an event which is subsequent to the simultaneous events which are reported in the embedded simultaneous paragraph which precedes it. *Although cryptic and short, this sentence patterns as one of the main events of the story.* In brief, God who has threatened to judge mankind and encouraged Noah to make extensive preparations to save himself from the catastrophe, now here deliberately *shuts the gates of mercy* on mankind while shutting Noah securely within. Further, it pictures God in an active role such as is not usual in other references to the catastrophe....²⁸⁵

That Noah is shut “within” or “behind” the door, emphasizes the wicked who are excluded, outside the door, for the next verse immediately begins: וַיְהִי הַמָּבּוּל. That deluge had already been defined a few verses earlier in 7.11 as the opening (נִפְתָּחוֹ) of the windows of heaven, so that the account may be read as the difference between two *petahs*. YHWH’s shutting the door

²⁸² The examples could be multiplied. In 6.21, Noah is commanded: “But as for *you* (וְאַתָּה), take for yourself (לָךְ)...and gather it for yourself (אֲסֹף),” such a work then defined as being “for you (לָךְ) and for them (וְלָהֶם).”

²⁸³ B.W. Anderson, “From Analysis to Synthesis,” 35. B. Jacob refers to these words as “the religious quintessence of the whole story” (*Genesis*, 54). Cf. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 120.

²⁸⁴ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 139.

²⁸⁵ R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 247 (emphasis added).

manifests his “radically”²⁸⁶ distinguishing between the righteous and the wicked. Andersen demonstrates chiastic patterning links entry into the ark with the onset of the deluge:

The whole of Gen 7.6-16 is an elaborate piece of epic composition, in which there are only two events both already stated at the beginning, namely, the onset of the flood and entry into the ark. Descriptions of these events alternate – flood (v 6), entry (vv 7-9), flood (vv 10-12), entry (vv 13-16a), flood (v 17). A third event (the closing of the door) is mentioned only once (v 16b).²⁸⁷

Wenham agrees this coming of the flood and entry into the ark are to be seen “as essentially one event.”²⁸⁸ So, too, McEvenue notes the “sharply contrasted echo: on this day of condemnation, on this same very day a festive salvation by entry.”²⁸⁹ Longacre, as well, utilizing discourse analysis, determined the cosmic catastrophe is contemporaneous with Noah’s entering the ark as one event, the second event being YHWH’s shutting Noah in the ark.²⁹⁰ The dating of 7.11 serves, further, “to solemnize” the opening of the flood gates, and both “solemnize the *entry*, as is clear from ‘on this day’ and ‘on this very day’ in 7.11b and 7.13a. The second date, and the second cosmic effect (i.e., 7.11) are referred to the entry....”²⁹¹ Mesopotamian parallels confirm the expression “on that day” as a day of both destruction and recreation, violence and birth.²⁹² One might even refer back to 6.17, 18 for the same point: the first mention of הַמַּבּוּל is set in contrast to Noah’s deliverance via the ark which is itself mentioned as consequent to the covenant.²⁹³ Thus, given the deluge, the contrast is between the salvation of the righteous (by entrance) and the judgment of the wicked (by barred entrance), the focal point being the shutting

²⁸⁶ So B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 152. Cf. Gen 19.10; Ex 12.23; Josh 2.19; Matt 25.10-13. “God’s distinguishing grace makes the entrance to the ark a seal of safety to Noah, but it is the door of death to the world” (W. Gage, *The Gospel of Genesis*, 125).

²⁸⁷ F.I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974) 124, 25.

²⁸⁸ G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 178.

²⁸⁹ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 62.

²⁹⁰ R.E. Longacre, “The Discourse Structure of the Flood Narrative,” 246-47.

²⁹¹ S.E. McEvenue, *Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 54 (emphasis added).

²⁹² Cf. R.E. Simoons-Vermeer’s discussion (“The Mesopotamian Floodstories,” 30-32) of J. van Dijk’s study (“Le Motif Cosmique dans la Pensée Sumérienne,” *AO* 28 [1964/65] 1-61) on the Sumerian *u₄.ri.a* = illo die = that day.

²⁹³ S.E. McEvenue notes that vv 17 and 18a are related by contrast though he unjustly severs mention of the Ark (18b) from the unit (*The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 47).

of the door in 7.16. The point is reiterated clearly at the close of the chapter, vv 22 and 23, where the dramatically detailed account of the death of “all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life...from man to animals to creepers to the birds,” etc., is followed by: “Only Noah survived, and those who were with him in the ark”/ וַיִּשְׁאֶר אֶת־נֹחַ וְאֶשְׁרֵי אִתּוֹ בַּתְּבָה׃ This contrast is emphasized by the parallel use of *niphals*, ascribing the divergent fates to YHWH’s sovereign justice.²⁹⁴ Indeed, the ark’s entry and exit frame the deluge.²⁹⁵ The same relationship between ark and deluge is established with the building instructions for the ark. Gen 6.14-16 is a tight literary piece, with עָשָׂה ‘*śh* (“make”) as the first and last word, and the ark, as *leitmotif*, occurring 12 times (5 times as the noun תְּבָה *tēbāh*, 7 times by suffix).²⁹⁶ This piece, however, is framed (6.13, 17) by divine declarations to destroy (שָׁחַת *śḥt*) all flesh (כָּל־בָּשָׂר *kol-bāśār*) and the earth (הָאָרֶץ *hā’āreṣ*).

The ark, by way of summary, as a typological (or symbolic) temple, is highlighted as the means of deliverance, and Noah, the righteous man, is the only one able to enter—the rest who are saved are so only because they are both (1) with him (אִתּוֹ), and (2) in the ark (בַּתְּבָה). Here, Jacob captures the theology vividly: “The others will be saved ‘with Noah.’ The essence of the whole story is the preservation of the world for the sake of a pious man; all others live so to speak in his shadow.”²⁹⁷ But God’s everlasting covenant, significantly, is established not merely with Noah but with his sons and their seed along with every living creature—these are all defined in 9.10 more narrowly as “all that came out of the ark (כָּל־יֹצֵאֵי תְּבָה),” which is also to

²⁹⁴ V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 297.

²⁹⁵ S.E. McEvenue, *The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 30.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁹⁷ B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 50.

say, all who had *entered*.²⁹⁸ To close with a basic point: an “entrance liturgy” regards (1) entrance stipulations for (2) an entrance/doorway (פֶּתַח) of (3) a temple or sanctuary. The entrance/doorway of the ark qualifies without question for the first two and, given the nature of the stipulation (צִדִּיק 7.1) along with the manifest parallels with the tabernacle/temple, the case for the third is strong. It may also be helpful at this point to recall the last chapter’s discussion on the gate of Eden. The first two mentions of פֶּתַח in the Pentateuch are the garden “entrance” (Gen 4.7), likely referring to the cherubim-guarded way to the tree of life, and Gen 6.16, referring to the entrance/doorway of the ark.

C. The Priestly Sacrifice of Atonement

Noah, as pointed out earlier, is portrayed as priest. Holloway, who describes Noah as “one exercising priestly functions,” states: “as a priestly figure only is Noah qualified to administer an ark patterned on the Solomonic temple.”²⁹⁹ Beyond this, however, Noah stands as the prototypical—one might even say “cosmic”—priest chiefly in his offering up of the lavish,³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ In light of the entrance liturgy of the New Covenant, wherein the saints enter through the new and living way of Christ’s flesh (Heb 10.19-22), St. Augustine does not appear so “fanciful” when he likens the entrance at the Ark’s “side” (צִדִּיק 6.16) to “the wound which was made when the side of the Crucified was pierced with the spear: for by this those who come to Him enter; for thence flowed the sacraments by which those who believe are initiated” (Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, M. Dods, trans. [New York: Modern Library, 2000] 516). Cf. also Justin, *Dialogue* 138.2 (ANF 1:268); Tertullian, *On Baptism* 8.4 (ANF 3:673) for Christological readings of the Noah narrative. See J.P. Lewis, “Noah and the Flood: In Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Tradition,” *BA* 47.4 (1984) 224-39 (esp. 230-31). Aspects of these analogies are strengthened when the “temple” of Christ’s body is paralleled to the Ark *as a temple*. Interestingly, the Hebrew term for “the window (חַלּוֹן) of the Ark” in 8.6 comes from the root חָלַל, “pierce” (J.F. Armstrong, “A Critical Note on Genesis VI 16a,” 331).

²⁹⁹ S.W. Holloway, “What Ship Goes There?” 352-53. Holloway footnotes the quote from J. Blenkinsop: “We may assume that P emphasizes the building of the sanctuary rather than accession to the throne as the climax of the [Deluge] myth, thus providing Israel with a highly unique and appropriate version of creation as a foundation or charter myth for the rebuilt sanctuary and the cult which was to be carried out in it” (*Prophecy and Canon* [Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame Press, 1977] 66). M. Kline refers to Noah as “the builder of the sanctuary house of God” (*God, Heaven, and Har Magedon*, 90).

³⁰⁰ “Lavish” especially in proportion to the remnant of animals exiting the Ark (cf. Westermann’s remarks [*Genesis* 1-11, 453]). Further, and contrary to the LXX and Sam.’s addition of “clean” to the birds, 7.3 designates the seven pairs toward “keeping the species alive.” Thus their inclusion in 8.20 may function as a literary device to demonstrate Noah’s piety. B. Jacob even founds man’s permission to eat animal meat (9.3) upon the basis of Noah’s offering up of animals. He also suggests the offering up of the seven clean pairs, based on the parallel with Job (Job 1.5), was for humankind (the seven members of Noah’s household) to stand atoned in the new creation

world-atoning, God-propitiating sacrifice atop the mountain. Thus Matthews well refers to Noah as the “priest for the postdiluvian world.”³⁰¹ The narrative emphasis upon Noah’s act of worship, his building the altar and offering up the burnt offerings, will become particularly evident as we consider now its depiction as the first act of the new creation, its propitiating nature, and its function as the dénouement to the etiological narrative.

1. ALTAR-BUILDING AND SACRIFICE AS THE PRIMARY ACT

Gen 8.20 “records the first building of an altar in Scripture (one is evidently presupposed but not mentioned in 4.3-5) and the first offering of ‘burnt offerings’ (עֹלָה).”³⁰² Thus the first human work witnessed by the liberated earth, as von Rad observes, was “an altar for God the Lord.”³⁰³ By portraying worship as the first act of the new creation, the narrative thus creates an emphasis upon Noah’s altar-building and sacrifice. While it is true the “first building,” as Westermann also underscores, “is an altar built to Yahweh,”³⁰⁴ yet that act, in retrospect, is shown in the narrative to have been, far from a spontaneous response to deliverance, the fulfillment of methodical calculation from the beginning. Indeed, the discussion of “clean” (טָהוֹר *tāhōr*) animals in 7.2, the first occurrence of this root (cf. Lev 11; Deut 14.3-12),³⁰⁵ clearly looks toward the sacrifice of 8.20. Meat not having been allowed the table of man thus far in the narrative’s

(*Genesis*, 62, 63). All three paradigmatic sacrifices (Abel, Noah, and Abraham’s) appear to be “lavish,” in the sense that David speaks of: “I will not offer to the LORD burnt offerings that cost me nothing” (2 Sam 24.24), as Wenham notes (cf. “The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice,” pp 93-102 in *Pomegranates & Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, A. Hurvitz, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995]).

³⁰¹ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 393. Ziusudra, the “Noah” of the “Eridu Genesis” or Sumerian flood account, is also a priest, a *guda-abzu* (cf. T. Jacobsen, “The Eridu Genesis,” *JBL* 100.4 [1981] 523).

³⁰² G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 189. Cf. his discussion on the nature of the sacrifice as propitiatory (189-90). Significantly, Noah’s worship, like Adam’s, is not as an “Israelite” but as a representative of “everyman.”

³⁰³ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, 121. B. Waltke similarly writes: “Significantly, Noah’s first act after emerging from the ark is to worship God” (*Genesis*, 142). Cf. also V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 307.

³⁰⁴ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 453.

³⁰⁵ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 138. Cf. also U. Cassuto’s discussion of “took/take” from Gen 8.20//7.2 (*Genesis II*, 117).

history, the distinction between clean and unclean must be cultic rather than dietary.³⁰⁶ Not only the antediluvian preparations for sacrifice, but also the singular usage (in Genesis) of a common technical term in cultic law, “restful smell” (רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹהֶה *rêah hannîḥōah* 8.21; cf. Lev 1.9; 2.2; 3.5, etc.), underscores the significance of Noah’s act.³⁰⁷ Sailhamer, further, notes the significant parallels between Noah’s altar and Moses’ altar at Mount Sinai in Exod 24:

(1) The building of the altar follows a major act of God’s salvation—God’s rescue of Noah from the flood and God’s deliverance from bondage in Egypt; (2) the altar and the offering mark the establishment of a “covenant” (*b’rît*) with God (Gen 9.9; Exod 24.7); (3) the outcome of both covenants is God’s “blessing” (Gen 9.1, *way’bāreḵ*; Exod 23.25, *ûbēraḵ*); (4) the central provision is protection from the “beasts of the field” or “wild animals” (Gen 9.2, *ḥayyaṭ ḥā’āreṣ*; Exod 23.29, *ḥayyaṭ ḥaśśādeh*) and human enemies (Gen 9.5-6; Exod 23.22); (5) specific mention is made that the “earth” will be preserved from further destruction (Gen 9.11; Exod 23.29); (6) in Genesis the visible “sign” of the covenant is a rainbow in the “clouds” (*be’ānān*, 9.13-17); in Exodus the covenant is marked by the appearance of the glory of God in the “cloud” (*he’ānān*, 24.15) that covered the mountain; (7) both covenants state stipulations that must be obeyed (Gen 9.4; Exod 24.3).³⁰⁸

2. A SACRIFICE OF PROPITIATION

The burnt offerings (עֹלֹת) offered up by Noah are a means both of calling upon YHWH and of atoning for the worshiper (cf. Lev 1.4; Job 1.5).³⁰⁹ Though the significance of this act of worship is often understated for theological reasons,³¹⁰ the text clearly indicates God’s heart changed toward mankind though mankind’s heart itself had not changed (cf. 6.5, 8.21).³¹¹ Indeed, given

³⁰⁶ J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 313.

³⁰⁷ G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah: A Paradigm of Sacrifice,” 94.

³⁰⁸ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 131; *idem.*, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 128. For the fourth and last points, cf. S.D. Mason, “Another Flood?” NOTE: The usage of “clouds” in Gen 9.13-17 assumes their presence, thus forming a more striking comparison between the Ararat mountain and Mount Sinai: the Presence of God is marked by a cloud-covered mountain.

³⁰⁹ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 142.

³¹⁰ G.J. Wenham steers a clear course: “Ultimately, of course, the acceptance of every sacrifice depends on God’s antecedent gracious purpose, whereby he appointed the sacrificial system as a means of atonement for reconciliation between God and man. A fundamental principle of the Levitical law is ‘I have given (the blood) for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls.’ But this is not to deny sacrifice’s importance; rather it is to assert its real efficaciousness, because God has declared it so and promised to respond to it” (*Genesis 1-15*, 190). Also considering the sacrifice propitiatory: H. Gunkel, O. Procksch; J. Skinner; G. von Rad; J.H. Sailhamer; B. Waltke. *Contra*: U. Cassuto; A. Dillman; C. Westermann; A. Ross, who suggest the sacrifice was merely an act of thanksgiving.

³¹¹ B. Waltke rightly states: “The Flood effects no fundamental change in humanity, but Noah’s sacrifice effects a change in God by pacifying his righteous indignation against sin” (*Genesis*, 143). It also helpful here to keep in mind J.H. Walton’s discussion of the LORD’s being “sorry” in Gen 6.6, 7 as an “auditing of accounts” (*Genesis*,

that God's heart has changed while the primary reason for the deluge (man's heart) has not changed, the Deity, apart from a propitiating sacrifice, would seem open to the charge of capriciousness, the reader wondering: "Was the flood in vain?"³¹² That is, did the deluge accomplish anything if the original circumstance and conflict remains? Indeed, ancient Mesopotamian parallels lead precisely to this conclusion. In the Sumerian flood account, for example, the gods immediately lament over the irrevocability of their decision, the deliverance of Ziusudra by the clever god Enki being a private and covert attempt to undermine the totality of devastation (iii.15-17):³¹³

That day Nintur wept over her creatures
and holy Inanna was full of grief over their people;
but Enki took counsel with his own heart.

Similarly the *Epic of Gilgamesh* portrays the gods as horrified over the weight of their impulsive decision (XI 113-126):³¹⁴

Even the gods took fright at the Deluge,
they left and went up to the heaven of Anu,
lying like dogs curled up in the open.
The goddess cried out like a woman in childbirth,
Belet-ili wailed, whose voice is sweet:
"The olden times have turned to clay,
because I spoke evil in the gods' assembly.
How could I speak evil in the gods' assembly,
and declare war to destroy my people?
It is I who give birth, these people are mine!
And now, like fish, they fill the ocean!"
The Anunnaki gods were weeping with her,
wet-faced with sorrow, they were weeping [with her,]
their lips were parched and stricken with fever.

308-11), for the resolution of the narrative tension must be a substantial "balancing" of the accounts (not merely an opinion-change in the mind of God). Cf. R.W.L. Moberly's discussion wherein he quotes from Chrysostom, Luther, and Calvin on the difficulty of this apparent paradox (*Theology of the Book of Genesis*, 111-18). Moberly himself resorts to suggesting the "evil-thought" clause in 8.21 was a later insertion by a Hebrew scribe (117).

³¹² Such is the reading by D.L. Petersen ("The Yahwist on the Flood"). Cf. E. van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1-11* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 76.

³¹³ From T. Jacobsen, "The Eridu Genesis," 522. Cf. also S.M. Kramer's "The Deluge," pp 42-44 in *ANET*, 3rd ed., J.B. Pritchard, ed. (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1969); M. Civil, "The Sumerian Floodstory," pp 138-45, 167-72 in *Atrahasis, the Babylonian Story of the Flood*, W.G. Lambert and A.R. Millard, eds. (Oxford: OUP, 1969); R.E. Simoons-Vermeer, "The Mesopotamian Floodstories," 22.

³¹⁴ From A. George's translation, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: A New Translation* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1999) 92. Cf. E. Noort, "Stories of the Great Flood," 29.

Enlil is even reproached by Ea for “acting with rashness,”³¹⁵ and banned from coming to the offering for “he, unreasoning, brought on the deluge.”³¹⁶ Divine capriciousness is all the more emphatic in the Mesopotamian literature in that whenever a reason for the Flood is given, it is either (1) simply the unexplained will of the gods (as in *Gilgamesh*), or (2) a human fault that is non-moral in nature (*Atrahasis*).³¹⁷ Furthermore, the individuals spared the flood are not portrayed as exemplarily pious—that is, there is no didactic reason for their (arbitrary) salvation.³¹⁸ To Enlil, therefore, the great question is posed:³¹⁹

O warrior, thou wisest among gods, how thus indiscriminately couldst thou bring about this deluge?

Thus the ANE parallels sharpen the issue for the biblical account:³²⁰

Once the flood started, the gods were terror-struck at the very forces they themselves had unleashed. They were appalled at the consequences of their own actions, over which they no longer had any control. The gods, we are told, “were frightened by the deluge,” they “cowered like dogs crouched against the outer wall; Ishtar

³¹⁵ R.E. Simoons-Vermeer, “The Mesopotamian Floodstories,” 23.

³¹⁶ *Gilgamesh* XI.168 from E.A. Speiser, trans., “The Epic of Gilgamesh,” pp 72-99 in *ANET*, 95.

³¹⁷ D. Clines, “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 129; E. Noort, “Stories of the Great Flood,” 16-18, 23-35 [“Direct human guilt is not involved” (32)]; V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 273-74; M.E.L. Mallowan, “Noah’s Flood Reconsidered,” 62-82 (esp. 63); N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 49-51. While G. Pettinato (“Die Bestrafung des Menschengeschlechts durch die Sintflut,” *Orientalia* 37 [1968] 165-200) argues for a revolt by humanity against the gods, cf. W.L. Moran’s rejection of attempts to interpret the noise of mankind in *Atrahasis* as somehow morally evil (“Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood,” *Biblica* 52 [1971] 51-61). See E. Fisher (“Gilgamesh and Genesis: The Flood Story in Context,” *CBQ* 32 [1970] 392-402) for a morally accountable interpretation of mankind’s “noise.” The common understanding is that the flood was necessary due to overpopulation, the flood being the last resort after plague and drought had failed, overpopulation itself remedied after the flood by sterility and infant mortality. Cf. A. Kilmer, “The Mesopotamian Concept of Overpopulation and its Solution as Represented in the Mythology,” *Orientalia* 41 (1972) 160-77; T. Frymer-Kensky, “The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,” *BA* 40.4 (1977) 147-55 (esp. 149).

³¹⁸ N.M. Sarna makes a similar point: “The Bible leaves no doubt as to God’s motivations. The choice of Noah is inspired solely by his righteousness; caprice or partiality play no role in the divine resolution. In none of the Mesopotamian versions is any reason given for the divine favor to one individual...This scene, it will be noticed, is thoroughly devoid of an universal significance, completely empty of any didactic values” (*Understanding Genesis*, 51, 57). Cf. E. Noort, “Stories of the Great Flood,” 23-26.

³¹⁹ *Gilgamesh* XI.179, “The Babylonian Story of the Flood: Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet XI,” tr. J.V. Kinnier Wilson, pp 17-26 in *Documents from Old Testament Times*, ed. D.W. Thomas (London/New York: Nelson, 1958) 23. D. Clines notes: “But the point here is precisely that Enlil, in not distinguishing between the sinful and the righteous, has totally disregarded ethical consideration” (“The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” 129).

³²⁰ While not agreeing with his conclusion, we believe H.P. Müller is correct in pointing out that the diminished role of guilt in the ANE flood narratives highlights that issue in the Biblical version (H.P. Müller, “Das Motiv für die Sintflut: Die hermeneutische Funktion des Mythos und seiner Analyse,” *ZAW* 97 [1985] 295-316). It is even more sharpened by the travesty of Hollywood’s misrepresentation of God as capricious in the fashion of the pagan deities, such as in the 1999 TV miniseries on Noah’s ark, starring Jon Voigt (cf. J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 333).

cried out like a woman in travail.” After the deluge, there were arguments, quarrels and mutual recriminations among the gods.³²¹

Is YHWH thus capricious? Was he taken aback by the uncalculated use of his own cataclysmic power? Or had he simply forgotten the utilitarianism of a humanity created to meet his needs? To be sure, the point of the biblical narrative appears to be the opposite—YHWH *is* discriminate, able to save one family amidst the destruction of a godless generation (cf. Gen 18.25; 2 Pet 2.4-11). “There are two elements in the flood,” noted Benno Jacob, “the destruction of all living and the rescue of Noah. *Both* must be motivated.”³²² All the charges are avoided when the change of heart is understood, according to the text, as wrought by the aroma of Noah’s pleasing sacrifice.³²³ YHWH does not merely “change his mind” as some suggest;³²⁴ rather, his just wrath has been abated. That his heart has changed (i.e., been propitiated) is brought out by his speaking “to his heart” (לִבּוֹ-לֵבָי). The *wayyiqtol*s of 8.21 manifest the progression.³²⁵

³²¹ N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 48.

³²² B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 48 (emphasis added). Cf. also C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 393-94.

³²³ D. Clines, for example, affirms God’s sheer grace and mercy in promising not to send another Flood but, by failing to anchor that divine mercy in the sacrifice of Noah, he leaves one wondering if the biblical account is all that distinguished from the Mesopotamian narratives, as his article claims. While affirming that the cause for the Flood remains unchanged, Clines simply states that God has now bound himself to a different course of action, merely shifting the emphasis from capricious judgment (in the Mesopotamian accounts) to capricious grace (in the biblical account). Cf. “The Theology of the Flood Narrative,” esp. 138-40. W. Brueggemann portrays God as realizing after the flood that all “the terror of the waters has not changed” mankind, his deep grief itself being what finally “enables God to move past his own interest and to embrace his creature-partner in new ways” (*Genesis*, 80-1, 82). Failing to connect that change of heart to the propitiatory sacrifice, one is left with the impression that God somehow matured through the experience of the flood: “God has made a decision about the grief and trouble of his own heart....Because of the revolution in the heart of God, that relation [between God and creatures] is now based in unqualified grace....God’s creation is for all time protected from God’s impatience” (83-85). While he marks God’s remembering of Noah as the turning point of the narrative, Brueggemann states that creation’s assurance of divine good will is based upon the fact that “something has happened to God” (88), a change which he describes, again, as a maturing (rather than a being propitiated via Noah’s sacrifice, an event which he mentions only in passing on p. 80), and so leaving open the charge of divine capriciousness.

³²⁴ E. Noort, e.g., writes that “YHWH has come to ‘accept’ humanity’s evil inclinations, and will not again endanger the world order. Furthermore, human maliciousness will no longer affect YHWH’s ability to be God” (“Stories of the Great Flood,” 17).

³²⁵ The LXX, as Waltke notes (*Genesis*, 142), manifests the connection between the sacrifice and God’s resolution by the paraphrase “having considered.” V.P. Hamilton (*The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, 309) notes: “The first and second halves of this verse [8.21] have a cause-and-effect relationship. Observing Noah’s actions and smelling the aroma of his offering, Yahweh binds himself to a negative course of action for the future.”

נִרְחַח יְהוָה אֶת־רִיחַ הַגִּיחָהּ
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־לִבּוֹ לֹא־אֶסְףּ לְקַלְלֵל עוֹד אֶת־הָאָדָמָה

The chiastic parallel, in 6.5-7, makes the same point—YHWH responds out of his heart (6b, 7).³²⁶

וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֱלֹהִים
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶמְחֶה אֶת־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה

Thus, until his heart is changed by the sacrifice—even *after* the deluge event, there is no divine resolve toward forbearance and blessing.³²⁷ Further, the term used for YHWH’s smelling or breathing the sacrifice, רִיחַ *rêah*, is a technical cultic term for God’s pleasure in the sacrifice and worshiper (cf. Ex 29.18; Lev 1.9; 3.16; Num 15.3).³²⁸ The pivotal and efficacious sacrifice of Noah, then, by propitiating the wrath of God, changes mankind’s position from cursed to blessed.³²⁹ “From the narrative it was Noah’s offering for atonement that prompted God to declare his new intentions toward the sinful earth, despite human propensity toward sin.”³³⁰ Sailhamer similarly writes: “Humankind is fallen (9.21); but through a sacrifice laid as an

³²⁶ N.M. Sarna makes a similar point: “This statement [in 8.21] of divine resolve is a foil to that of 6.7; there it was for destruction, here for salvation. Similarly, the present observation on the nature of man verbally echoes that of 6.5. The whole makes for an inclusion, or envelope-like structure, with the chiastic reversal of the order signifying the antithesis to the antediluvian situation” (*Genesis*, 59).

³²⁷ Cf. G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah,” 94-95; J. Skinner, *Genesis*, 157. While N.M. Sarna posits the forty days of the Deluge as a period of atonement (*Genesis*, 54, 356), K.A. Matthews rightly notes that “forty days are not sufficient, for it is not until the sacrifice Noah offers that the Lord’s anger is fully pacified” (*Genesis 1-11.26*, 373). Matthews portrays the sacrifice as both a “thank offering” and one of atonement (392-93). See also J.H. Sailhamer, “Creation, Genesis 1-11, and the Canon,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.1 (2000) 89-106 (103).

³²⁸ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 142.

³²⁹ “Mankind shall find its higher moral unity not in Adam, the natural man, but in that pious father who by his offering brought about God’s gracious resolution to preserve the world. Noah’s offering is burnt completely on the altar; it is an expression of complete devotion to God and at the same time atonement and intercession for the other survivors” (B. Jacob, *Genesis*, 63).

³³⁰ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 393.

offering on the altar, they may find and enjoy God's blessing (8.21-9.3).³³¹ Indeed, the ensuing covenant (9.9) has even been viewed as repayment for Noah's offering.³³²

3. THE ETIOLOGICAL DÉNOUEMENT

The propitiating character of the sacrifice is highlighted not only by the evident effect upon God, but also by how that effect comprises the expected (and only satisfying) fulfillment of Noah's birth etiology (cf. 5.28-29).³³³ Damrosch sees Noah's role as reversing the estrangement between God and Adam, pointing to the intertextual links between 5.28-29 and 3.17-19, and to the echo of Adam in 6.6: הָאָדָם *hā'ādām*—God thus repented of “making the Man/Adam.”³³⁴

He also points out the poetic parallelism, inverted, between 5.29a-b and 6.7c-8a.³³⁵

*Nōah x x y'naḥ^amēnū
niḥamtī x x w^eNōah*

Noah's name, then, plays on God's “repenting” the making of הָאָדָם. While YHWH had declared in 6.7, “I will blot out הָאָדָם,” yet the deluge narrative indicates no quelling of his wrath by the destruction of mankind—the waters relent only because, 8.1: “But God remembered Noah.”

³³¹ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 130-31.

³³² B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 146. That the ensuing covenant is based upon the atoning sacrifice of Noah is further verified by the chiasmic structure of 8.20-9.17, connecting 8.20-22 with 9.8-17 (*Ibid.*, 127). B. Jacob also states God's monologue in 8.21-22 is “motivated by Noah's sacrifice” (*Genesis*, 62).

³³³ While some point to 9.18-29 as the fulfillment (i.e., Noah's viniculture), the overall effect of that narrative tends rather to Noah's shame. However, potent viniculture should in any case be seen as the fruition and demonstration of the blessing or “relief from the curse”—that is, the result of 8.21ff and not the blessing itself. Cf. R. Hendel, “*Leitwort* Style in the J Primeval Narrative,” 104-05; E.G. Kraeling, “The Interpretation of the Name Noah in Gen 5.29,” *JBL* 48.3/4 (1929) 138-43 (esp. 139). Kraeling points out that (1) the OT nowhere makes any allusion to the “restful” effect of wine; (2) it is unnatural to suppose the disgraceful situation of Gen 9.20f suggests a fulfillment of 5.29 as a “cup of comfort.” W.M. Clark considers the vineyard story a “verification” that the curse has been lifted, the promise of 8.21 being the fulfillment of 5.29 (“The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 208). If one considers the curse of the ground as referring to the land's being filled with the blood of violence/ *ḥāmās* (cf. Gen 4.9-14), the Lord's “washing” of the earth and Noah's propitiatory sacrifice as fulfilling the etiology makes sense even more strikingly. The idea of a relationship between the ground and *ḥāmās* is suggested by T. Frymer-Kensky, “The Atrahasis Epic and Its Significance for Our Understanding of Genesis 1-9,” 147-55.

³³⁴ D. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 128-131. Cf. also H. Marks, “Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology,” who states “The stylistically obtrusive echo of Adam's own name etiology in the middle of the gloss alerts us to Noah's role as the second Adam (מֶן הָאָדָם, 2.7)—an association resumed in the concluding vineyard episode, where Noah is again introduced as the first “man of the soil” (אִישׁ הָאָדָם, 9.20)” (25).

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 130.

Salvation via the ark does not fulfill Noah's etiology. Rather, Noah is saved in order to worship, to offer *the* sacrifice that causes God another "repenting" (נִחַמְתִּי *niḥamtî*) that is a "rest/comforting" (הַנִּיחָה *hannîḥāh*), that turns cursing into blessing.³³⁶ Noah's priestly mediation is the means by which relief from the toil of the cursed ground became a reality.³³⁷ "For God as well as for humanity, Noah is the consolation for the fall of Adam."³³⁸ This point is more clearly seen by following the narrative's climactic association of Noah's name with the "spirit of life" (6.17; 7.15; 7.22 [cf. 2.7] – נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים) as the burnt offerings rise to YHWH and he smells the "restful smell" (רֵיחַ הַנִּיחָה, 8.21). From the narrative viewpoint of the character of God, the story is about the grief (עֵצֶב *'eseb*) that fills his heart by man's wickedness, a point not resolved until the divine pain and indignation is assuaged by Noah's atoning sacrifice.³³⁹ That this propitiation marks the true resolution of the narrative, and Noah's etiology, is manifest by its parallel to the conflict of the prologue in 6.5-7:³⁴⁰

³³⁶ For the literary function of a word's variant meanings within a Hebrew narrative, "ironic doubling," cf. E. van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study," 19-35 (esp. pp 24-26 on Noah's name); H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," 21-42. Cf. also G.A. Herion, "Why God Rejected Cain's Offering: The Obvious Answer," pp 52-65 in *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday*, A.B. Beck, A.H. Bartelt, P.R. Raabe, C.A. Franke, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

³³⁷ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11*, 26, 394. Cf. O. Procksch, *Die Genesis: übersetzt und erklärt* (Leipzig: Deichertsch, 1913) 56. There is a sense whereby Noah's sacrifice makes up for Cain's. Cf. F.A. Spina, "The 'Ground' for Cain's Rejection (Gen 4): *ʾdāmā* in the Context of Gen 1-11," *ZAW* 104.3 (1992) 319-32.

³³⁸ D. Damrosch, *Narrative Covenant*, 130.

³³⁹ Cf. B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 142. E. Noort writes "the final form of the Biblical text places not the unblemished Noah but the remorse of God at the beginning of the Flood story. The character of this definitive account is coloured by this arrangement. In the final redaction, the narrative begins with a God deep in sadness and remorse about what his creation has become" ("Stories of the Great Flood," 30).

³⁴⁰ Cf. H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," 26; E. van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study," 24. While working from a source critical perspective, S.E. McEvenue (*The Narrative Style of the Priestly Writer*, 29-30) delineates 8.21 as J's theological conclusion, and the covenant blessing and sign as P's – both "conclusions" precluding any suggestion that Noah's etiology and/or the narrative's point is not resolved until the viniculture of 9.20.

GEN 6.5-7	GEN 8.21
YHWH saw that the wickedness of man (הָאָדָם) was great in the earth, and that every imagination (יָצָר) of the thoughts of his heart (לִבּוֹ) was only evil (רָע) continually. And YHWH was sorry (וַיִּנָּחֵם) that he had made (עָשָׂה) man (הָאָדָם) on earth and it grieved (וַיַּעֲצֹב) him in his heart (לִבּוֹ). So YHWH said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the ground (הָאָדָמָה).	And YHWH smelled the restful smell (רִיחַ הַנִּיחָח), and YHWH said in his heart (לִבּוֹ), "I will never again curse the ground (הָאָדָמָה) because of man (הָאָדָם) for the imagination (יָצָר) of man's heart (לִב) is evil (רָע) from his youth."

The movement from YHWH's regret (וַיִּנָּחֵם) to his rest (הַנִּיחָח)³⁴¹ brings fulfillment to Noah's etiology as evident from the etymological gloss itself where three stems from the prologue first appear, 5.29: Noah will "bring relief/comfort (וַיִּנְחֵם) ...work [literally "makings"] (וַיַּעֲשֶׂה) ...and toil [vexation] (וַיַּעֲצֹב)," associating Noah's name to the prologue conflict and its resolution³⁴²—a conflict particularly nuanced by the divine perspective (i.e., both discovered ["YHWH saw," 6.5] and resolved ["YHWH smelled," 8.21] from the divine perspective), God being the main character in the narrative.³⁴³ The two alternatives for God in relation to mankind, נָחַם and חָן, to save and to destroy, are reconciled in 8.21.³⁴⁴ From a text-semantic perspective, then, the narrative tension is not released with the abating of the waters in Noah's salvation, and neither is the etiology fulfilled—these two elements converge, rather, upon the sacrifice:

The offering of Noah is soothing to God, brings about in God a state of appeasement. The consequence of the first autonomous action of Noah is that God comes to rest, to נָח. He causes God to change from נָחַם and נָחַם to נָח and נָח, in other words from נָחַם in the sense of regret, avenge, execute wrath, or will to change, to נָח in the sense of compassion, comfort, rest, or non-change. Noah, who was intended by his father Lamech to bring נָחַם to the people and to remove the curse from the ground (5.29), fulfills his father's program. Through his נָח offering he brings God to נָח Noah makes God change his program from destruction to continuing creation (8.21-9.17). Thus from a text-semantic point of view, Noah turns out to be a more important character than a narrative analysis might lead us to believe: the real transformation in the story is made by him. The syntagmatic relationships נָח, נָחַם, חָן, נָח show us the radical change...in 8.20-21.³⁴⁵

³⁴¹ For the scriptural significance of divine rest as metaphor, cf. M. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 208-12.
³⁴² Cf. H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," 27.
³⁴³ E. van Wolde, "A Text-Semantic Study of the Hebrew Bible," 23; *idem.*, *Words Become Worlds*, 77.
³⁴⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 24-26.
³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

Here my own basic chiastic outline is relevant in the connection between 6.9-22 (NOAH BUILDS ARK/ COVENANT TO BE ESTABLISHED) and 8.20-9.19 (NOAH BUILDS ALTAR/ COVENANT ESTABLISHED), emphasizing as it does the cosmic significance of the altar.³⁴⁶ Notably, the name YHWH occurs six times in the narrative, three with reference to entering the ark (7.1, 5, 16), and three with reference to the altar (8.20, 21^{x2}). Part of the emphasis also lies in the fact that Noah's altar-building is the first recorded instance in Scripture.³⁴⁷ It may even be that the altar of burnt offering in the later Israelite cultus, possibly designed as a "cosmic mountain"/three-stepped ziggurat,³⁴⁸ reflects Noah's burnt offering on the "world mountain." The altar, to be sure, became the exclusive locus of the priests, their function often being defined by the duty of ascending the altar (לַעֲלוֹת עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ 1 Sam 2.28) so that deposed priests were those "who did not ascend (לֹא יָעֲלוּ) the altar of YHWH (אֶל־מִזְבֵּחַ יְהוָה)" (2 Kgs 23.9).³⁴⁹ While Waltke's outline, based on Anderson's, does not highlight the altar-building of Noah, the parallel is nevertheless

³⁴⁶ B.W. Anderson's outline leaves out both the building of the Ark and the altar ("From Analysis to Synthesis," 38); G.J. Wenham's includes the building of the Ark but not the altar ("The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," 337-38).

³⁴⁷ K.A. Matthew's footnote 82 (*Genesis 1-11.26*, 391) is relevant here: "According to some Jewish authorities, the altar was that of Adam, used by Cain and Abel (4.3-4) but later destroyed in the flood; it thus was rebuilt by Noah. It was also identified as the altar of Jerusalem, showing a linkage between the antediluvian fathers and Israel's worship (*Tg. Ps.-J.*; *Gen. Rab.* 34.9). In *Tg. Ps.-J.* at Gen 22.9, Abraham is said to have rebuilt Noah's altar."

³⁴⁸ The altar and ziggurat parallel was, to our knowledge, first suggested by P. Haupt, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. C.H. Toy (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1899) 187-88. Cf. W.F. Albright, "The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt-Offering" *JBL* 39.3/4 (1920) 137-42. Albright also makes the following points: Assyrian *zikkuratu* means properly "mountain-peak" (*zikkuratu šadī*), but can stand for the entire temple-tower, even as *ar'el* refers to the highest stage of the altar but can stand for the whole altar (140); the four horns atop the altar likely have cosmic significance, representing four mountains (141); E. Robertson, "The Altar of Earth (Exodus XX, 24-26)," *JJS* 1 (1948) 21; A. Parrot, *The Tower of Babel* (London, SCM Press, 1955) 34; R.L. Fisher, "The Temple Quarter," *JSS* 8.1 (1963) 37; M. Kline, "The Messianic Avenger," *Kerux* 7.1 (1992) 20-36. Kline notes that both altars and ziggurats are topped with horns (for ziggurats, see *Enuma Elish*, VI, 66), and posits the altar as a stylized stepped mountain. D.W. Parry ("Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God," pp 482-500 in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, vol. 1, J.M. Lundquist, S.D. Ricks, eds. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990], accessed at:

<http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63>.) writes that like "the temple itself, Israelite sacrificial altars had the appearance of miniature mountains" both "in form and substance" (Ex 20.24-25; Josh 8.31).

³⁴⁹ R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, J. McHugh, trans. (1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 356.

not lost on him: “Moreover, whereas Noah’s obedience in building the ark provided humanity’s salvation through the Flood (6.22), his soothing sacrifice provides salvation after it (8.20-21).”³⁵⁰

4. NOAH AS FLOOD HERO³⁵¹

The pacification of God, then, via Noah’s atoning sacrifice, is the final dénouement of the deluge account.³⁵² Indeed, Rendtorff saw 8.21 as key not only for the conclusion of the deluge narrative but of the primeval history itself.³⁵³ Thus the “focus of the story is not on the flood,” as Brueggemann notes, “but upon the change wrought in God which makes possible a new beginning for creation.”³⁵⁴ This interpretation is in keeping with the overall structure of Genesis whereby human history is divided into three periods, each with a paradigmatic sacrifice of great moment: the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, and Abraham.³⁵⁵ A comparison here between Abraham and Noah is instructive:

But it is not simply that an extraordinary act of obedience by a righteous man [Abraham] leads to extraordinary blessing. It is that one man’s obedience climaxing in an act of sacrifice leads to extraordinary blessing. ...[T]he faithful obedience of Noah culminating in his sacrifices after the Flood changed God’s disposition toward sinful humanity. Noah’s sacrifice guaranteed mankind from the threat of a further deluge. Similarly Abraham’s obedience guaranteed the future of his descendants and that through them blessing should come to all nations.³⁵⁶

This priestly interpretation of Noah, moreover, accords with the late 2nd century B.C. work *Jubilees*, wherein Noah’s righteousness consists in obedience to sacerdotal legislation:³⁵⁷

³⁵⁰ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 126.

³⁵¹ In as much as any biblical character, apart from God, may be considered a “hero.” Most, rather (and including Noah), are more properly depicted as “saints,” human beings who submit to God’s will and are used of him for great deeds.

³⁵² B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 122-23. Westermann calls the divine decision to never again destroy humanity the “goal” of the narrative (*Genesis 1-11*, 475).

³⁵³ R. Rendtorff, “Genesis 8.21 und die Urgeschichte des Yahwisten,” *KuD* 7 (1961) 69-78.

³⁵⁴ W. Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 73. God’s heart, then, is the real sphere of drama (cf. 78-9).

³⁵⁵ G.J. Wenham, “The Akedah,” 93. Cf. W.M. Clark, “The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 195ff.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 102. W.M. Clark makes a similar comparison (“The Righteousness of Noah,” 274).

³⁵⁷ J.C. VanderKam, “The Righteousness of Noah,” 20. Noah is also depicted in *Jubilees* “in the important priestly function of establishing (and celebrating) festivals in the sacral calendar (6.8-10, 22-38)” (21). Matthews also points out that this interpretation was common in the intertestamental period: “Noah was perceived in *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*

And he made atonement for the earth, and took a kid and made atonement by its blood for all the guilt of the earth; for everything that had been on it had been destroyed, save those that were in the ark with Noah. (6.2)

Thus, while God is the main character in the narrative, Noah the righteous priest may yet be considered the literary “hero” of the story who both “walks with” and “propitiates/ brings to rest” God.³⁵⁸ “Noah,” in fact, “brings comfort both to humankind and to God.”³⁵⁹ But further, not only by the *וְיָלֵךְ אִתּוֹ* phrase in 6.9; not only because the narrative begins and ends with (God’s speech to) Noah;³⁶⁰ and not only because the various word-plays on his name indicate Noah as a central character;³⁶¹ but because the central question³⁶² of the text is a soterio-liturgical one: “*Who* may ascend the mountain of YHWH?,” the narrative of the deluge is really a narrative about Noah.³⁶³ This is the same as to stress that the narrative is not about the judgment of the world, but how it was that Noah was saved from that judgment. For example, Sailhamer notes God’s gracious response to Noah’s righteousness and obedience of faith as the central purpose of the account:

as a priest who made atonement for the corrupted earth and maintained the laws of cultic purity” (K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26*, 357).

³⁵⁸ Cf. E. van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds*, 77, 83. B. Jacob (*Genesis*, 66) is thus able to describe Noah as a “pre-Israelite hero” for whose virtue the world and mankind owes its preservation. B. Waltke poignantly asks: “Can God count on Noah? To be sure, God authors covenant, but it cannot be effected without Noah’s fidelity (see 7.1). If Noah does not build the ark and enter it, not only Noah and all life will perish, but so will God’s purpose to rule the earth through Adam and his promise to crush the Serpent through the woman’s seed. The future of salvation history rides on Noah’s faithfulness” (*Genesis*, 123). We use the term “hero” not in the humanistic literary tradition (e.g., Gilgamesh, Achilles, etc.), but in the Scriptural tradition of the “saint,” i.e., “hero of faith.”

³⁵⁹ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 118.

³⁶⁰ The shift in emphasis caused by this frame leads Westermann, e.g., to say the narrative of the flood has been “converted” into a “narrative about Noah” (*Genesis 1-11*, 412). He establishes, as other commentators do, that the soteriological significance of Noah’s piety is the point of the narrative, a point saliently in accord with establishing that ethical requirement within the broader cultic context of approaching God (Ps 15; 24). Westermann does, in fact, view the setting apart of the sanctuary as the goal of the whole work (414).

³⁶¹ Cf. J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 117.

³⁶² “The question of righteousness is central...” (W.M. Clark, “The Flood and the Structure of the Pre-patriarchal History,” 195).

³⁶³ It is yet true, however, that the action and dramatic elements continually point the reader to the nature and character of God. Cf. J.H. Walton, *Genesis*, 332.

The account of the flood begins in v 9 with a description of Noah's righteousness. The purpose of the story is not to show why God sent the flood but to show why God saved Noah. The ark, not the flood, is the focus of the author's attention.³⁶⁴

W.M. Clark, considering the narrative from the perspective of royal election, writes:

As the king functions on behalf of the entire people from whom he is chosen, so the choice of Noah is not to the exclusion of the rest of mankind but rather for its salvation. Noah is the potential *ṣaddîq* on whose subsequent actions depends the salvation of mankind.³⁶⁵

As the priestly figure able to ascend the mountain of YHWH, moreover, Noah stands as a new Adam, the primordial man who dwells in the divine Presence—*homo liturgicus*. As such, he foreshadows the high priest of the tabernacle cultus who alone will enter the paradisiacal Holy of holies.

CONCLUSION

A new beginning for the new creation is possible only via Noah's sacrifice.³⁶⁶ Noah is thus a prototypical mediator, the priest whose obedience quelled the wrath of God. The righteous priest and his burnt offering, moreover, "are prototypes of Israel's priests and their sacrifices (cf. Job 1.5; 42.8)."³⁶⁷ Once more, then, the narrative catechizes Israel regarding the logic of the tabernacle/temple cultus.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁴ J.H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, 118.

³⁶⁵ W.M. Clark, "The Righteousness of Noah," 277. Clark also states: "Noah becomes by virtue of the acceptance of his sacrifice a *ṣaddîq* in relationship with Yahweh. ...[Noah was] to function as a *ṣaddîq* for the salvation of mankind" (274).

³⁶⁶ This point gains in significance upon viewing the covenant, which ensures the survival of creation (cf. R.W.E. Forrest, "Paradise Lost Again: Violence and Obedience in the Flood Narrative," *JSOT* 19.62 [1994] 3-17), as a response to Noah's propitiatory sacrifice. Even as in the Cain and Abel narrative, the existence of humanity is bound up with the offering of sacrifice (cf. C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 402).

³⁶⁷ B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 159. We agree as well with the rest of Waltke's statement that Noah the priest and his burnt offering also "prefigure Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and his sacrifice."

³⁶⁸ While one might agree with Kraeling ("The Interpretation of the Name Noah in Gen 5.29," 143) that the "flood-story as such has all the earmarks of a cult-legend that was used in connection with a seasonal festival," limiting the application to pacification against excess winter-rains unnecessarily excises the narrative from the purpose of its placing within the Pentateuch. Cf. G.J. Wenham, "The Akedah," 93-102, for how the Genesis stories express principles integral to cultic law; D. Damrosch, *The Narrative Covenant*, 261-97: "Thus the priestly writers orient the Yahwistic flood story toward the ideal of order of ritual..." (293).

CONCLUSION

The pattern of through the waters → to the mountain → for worship is fulfilled. Positioned within its ANE context, the deluge narrative, as all stories of a watery triumph, is not an end in itself, but rather “the ideological foundation upon which solemn temples, lofty palaces, and entire societies were built.”³⁶⁹ Thus one might conclude with Westermann that the setting apart of the sanctuary is the goal of the primeval history of Genesis, determining “everything in it and is at work...shaping the narrative.”³⁷⁰ That goal, further, calls for a reading of the deluge narrative within its temple mythopoeic context, that is, within a cosmic mountain ideology. Indeed, the story of the deluge accords well with many of the cosmic mountain features delineated by G.A. Anderson.³⁷¹

As in other chaos sequences in the Hebrew Bible, the powers of destruction are conceived of as turbulent waters. The mountain of God affords the ultimate bulwark against such a mighty adversary. ...Finally, we should also mention the holiness of the cosmic mountain. Those who would ascend its heights must be righteous (Ps 15; 24.3-6). ...The cosmic mountain is more than just a literary image. This mythic image is reflected in historical Israel in the cultus of the temple.

The pedagogy of the narrative, then, paralleled to the account of Paradise, finds culmination in the ritual of the tabernacle cult, namely restoration into the Presence of God.

³⁶⁹ J.D. Pleins, *When the Great Abyss Opened*, 123. He offers Marduk's creation of Babylon and Baal's building his house at Ugarit as examples.

³⁷⁰ C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, 414. Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure of P,” 275-92 (esp. 278, 286, 289). G.J. Wenham also sees “cultic and priestly concerns that run through Gen 1-8 (Sabbath, Garden of Eden//sanctuary, acceptable sacrifice [ch. 4], aversion to mixtures [6.1-4], clean/unclean, Sabbath observance earlier in the flood story)” (*Genesis 1-15*, 189-90).

³⁷¹ G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 191. Likewise, S.E. Balentine writes: “[T]he Torah inserts a pointed reminder of the importance of worship: God restores the cosmic order but Noah's act of worship (Gen 8.20-21) marks the transition in God's heart from pain to promise” (*The Torah's Vision of Worship* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999] 82).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Exodus

- I. Through the Waters: Exod 14
 - A. Death to Life-in-Egypt
 - B. The Waters of Creation and the “Rebirth” of Israel
- II. To the Mountain for Worship. Exod 19-24
 - A. Mount Sinai as Cosmic Mountain
 - 1. Sinai as Central Mountain of the Torah
 - 2. Sinai as Central Mountain of the Cultus
 - B. The Gate Liturgy
 - 1. Moses as New Adam
 - 2. The Holiness of Sinai
 - 3. “Who shall Ascend?”
 - C. The Altar and the Divine Presence
 - 1. The Altar as Mountain of God
 - 2. Theophanic Presence atop the Altar
 - 3. Sacrificial Ascent
- III. The Cultus of Israel: Exod 25-40
 - A. The Centrality of the Tabernacle Cultus
 - B. From Creation to the Tabernacle
 - C. From the Ark of Noah to the Tabernacle
 - D. From Mount Sinai to the Tabernacle
 - E. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood
 - F. To Dwell in the Divine Presence

The Exodus

INTRODUCTION

The exodus, in the words of Frye, “is the definitive deliverance and the type of all the rest,” so that we may say “mythically the Exodus is the only thing that really happens in the Old Testament.”¹ The exodus out of Egypt is an event at the heart of biblical faith,² in which creation and redemption coincide,³ whereby YHWH’s victory over the waters of chaos becomes identified with his victory at the Sea⁴ through which Israel, his “son” (cf. Exod 4.22-23), is born. It is a

¹ N. Frye, “Exodus: The Definitive Deliverance,” pp 73-81 in *Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations*, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987) 75. Frye rightly points out the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as the New Testament event and antitype of the exodus (75-76). Cf. J. Plataras, *The God of Exodus: The Theology of the Exodus Narratives* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1966) 1-25, 165.

² A. Stock, *The Way in the Wilderness: Exodus, Wilderness, and Moses Themes in Old Testament and New* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1969) 5.

³ S. Paas, *Creation and Judgment: Creation Texts in Some Eighth Century Prophets* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) 426. Thus J.K. Bruckner (*Exodus* [NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008] 128-29) refers to the scope of the Lord’s self-revelation via the exodus as an act that is both cosmic and historical, redeeming creation back to the Creator.

⁴ B.W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 229.

second act of creation whereby the host of Egypt, an incarnation of the chaos dragon, is slayed by YHWH to establish his kingdom.⁵ Broadly, the book of Exodus narrates how by mighty signs of power YHWH delivered Israel from the Pharaoh's oppression in Egypt and brought his people to himself at Sinai in order to dwell in their midst by means of the tabernacle.⁶ The epic⁷ movement entails transforming the work (עֲבֹדָה) of the sons of Israel from slavery to worship, from building the *miskan*/"cities of storage" (מִסְכְּנֹת) (1.11) for Pharaoh to the construction of the *mishkan*/tabernacle (מִשְׁכַּן) (39.32) for YHWH.⁸ It is no small irony here that the title for Egypt's king, "Pharaoh," means literally "The Great House."⁹ These building programs, and the broader "kingship pattern" of royal victory and temple building within which they are set, lend coherence to the book's narrative.¹⁰ The narrative's progression from Egypt to Sinai, from

⁵ B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992) 3, 82, 102-127.

⁶ This summary follows roughly that of A.C. Leder, "Reading Exodus to Learn and Learning to Read Exodus," *CTJ* 34 (1999) 35. O.T. Allis similarly states: "The God of Israel, who has delivered His people from Egyptian bondage and brought them to the Mount of God, and who has manifested Himself to them, shown them His glory, and given them His Law, will now condescend to dwell in the midst of the people whom He has received into covenant relation with Himself" (*God Spoke by Moses: An Exposition of the Pentateuch* [Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1951] 81). G. Davies ("The Theology of Exodus," pp 137-52 in *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*, E. Ball, ed. [JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999] 149) states the "book of Exodus tells the story of the people of God as they pass from persecution and slavery through liberation, revelation and rebellion to the establishment of a place for true worship in the presence of their God."

⁷ The "story is epic in content and scope" (T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus* [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009] 44 and fn 135).

⁸ A.C. Leder, "Reading Exodus to Learn," 21. In a follow-up article, Leder argues for the coherence of Exodus based in part on the building programs with which the book begins and ends ("The Coherence of Exodus: Narrative Unity and Meaning," *CTJ* 36 (2001) 251-69 [261-62]). For oppression and bondage as a theme crucial to the Exodus narrative, see M. Walzer, "The House of Bondage: Slaves in Egypt," pp 83-97 in *Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations*, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987). Cf. also T.E. Fretheim ("Because the Whole Earth is Mine: Theme and Narrative in Exodus," *Int* 50.3 [1996] 226-39) who states the book of Exodus "moves from Israel's servitude to Pharaoh to its service to Yahweh, from the enforced construction of buildings for Pharaoh to the willing assemblage of a dwelling place for God. ...The amount of material in Exodus associated with oppression approximates that associated with worship. Whatever sense is to be made of the details regarding the tabernacle, they demonstrate the importance of worship and God's special presence related thereto" (230).

⁹ Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus: The Heritage of Biblical Israel* (New York: Schocken, 1986) 18.

¹⁰ A.C. Leder, "The Coherence of Exodus," 261-62. "The abundant evidence of this pattern suggests it is a well-known literary configuration with central, cosmological significance" (262). The kingship pattern is discussed further below. The following outline is based on Leder's (33):

A Out of Egypt: Lament to Praise (1-15.21)

B Through the Wilderness: Waiting upon the Creator (15.22-18 27)

A' To the Mountain of God, Sinai: Becoming YHWH's People (19-24)

slavery to covenant, chaos to creation, is itself symbolized by the fundamental transition upon archetypal geography: from Waters to Mount.¹¹ “The great contrast between Mount Sinai and the Nile is symbolic: while the Nile stands for Egypt, the mountain indicates the God of Israel, one of whose epithets is ‘rock’ (צור).”¹²

Already, then, the cosmogonic pattern, to be considered in this chapter as the overarching movement of Exodus, begins to emerge: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship,¹³ a pattern we have identified to be of a piece with cosmic mountain ideology, fundamental to the religions of the ancient Near East, including the cultus of Israel. Wensinck,¹⁴ early in the 20th century, had noted an oft-repeated pattern in biblical literature: Chaos → Creation → Covenant, tabulated as follows by Wyatt:¹⁵

C Tabernacle: Instructions for God’s mediated Presence (25-31)

B’ Golden Calf: Waiting upon YHWH (32-34)

C’ Tabernacle: Construction for God’s mediated Presence (35-40)

¹¹ Cf. F. Polak, “Water, Rock, and Wood: Structure and Thought Pattern in the Exodus Narrative,” *JANES* 25 (1997) 19-42 (29-30, 39). Polak continues: “This water-mountain symbolism is a particular application of a general pattern which, as stated at the outset of this study, forms a schematic landscape, illustrated by many examples from the Hebrew Bible and ancient Near Eastern sources, e.g., Egyptian creation narratives, neo-Assyrian reliefs, and Mesopotamian poetry” (34-35). A.C. Leder similarly refers to Egypt and Sinai as “antipodes,” the movement from one to the other accomplished via itinerary notices (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 33). This is in accord with Dozeman’s two-part summary of the book of Exodus as the Power of Yahweh in Egypt (1.1-15.21) and the Presence of Yahweh in the wilderness/Sinai setting (15.22-40.38) (*Exodus*, 44-45).

¹² F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator: The Unfolding of a Theme in the Book of Exodus,” pp 113-47 in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation*, M. Vervenne, ed. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996) 114; *idem.*, “Water, Rock, and Wood,” 39. Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) 23. Polak has discerned that the triad of water, rock, and wood dominates the architecture of the Book of Exodus in its entirety, the mountain symbolizing God and the Nile representing Egypt, while the wood (such as Moses’ staff in Exod 3-4) mediates between them (“Water, Rock, and Wood,” 19). This delineation is suggestive for the Deluge narrative whereby the Ark (wood) certainly seems to mediate between the waters and the mount. Further, in Exod 7.14-18 Pharaoh, being likened to a dragon (cf. Ezek 9.3-5; 32.2-6), is linked to the Nile (see Ph. Guillaume, “Metamorphosis of a Ferocious Pharaoh,” *Biblica* 85.2 [2004] 232-36).

¹³ There are lexical and thematic links between the Nile in Exod 2 and the Sea Crossing in ch. 14 (cf. W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18* [AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999] 502) so that the pattern of going “through the waters” may embrace in general fashion the substance of Exod 1-15.

¹⁴ A.J. Wensinck, *The Ocean in the Literature of the Western Semites* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1918) 50-55.

¹⁵ N. Wyatt, “‘Water, Water Everywhere...’: Musings on the Aqueous Myths of the Near East,” pp 189-237 in *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (London: Equinox, 2005) 224-25; first published in *De la Tablilla a la Inteligencia Artificial. Homenaje al Prof. Jesús Luis Cunchillos en su 65 aniversario*, D.A. Gonzalez Blanco, J.P. Vita, J.A. Zamora, eds. (Próximo Oriente Antiguo, Instituto de Estudios Islámicos y del Oriente Próximo: Zaragoza, 2004) 211-59. This is only a portion of Wyatt’s tabulation.

	Chaos (flood)	Creation (exodus)	Covenant
Genesis	Genesis 1.2	Genesis 1.3-25	Genesis 1.26-31
Genesis	Genesis 7.17-8.9	Genesis 8.10-19	Genesis 8.20-9.17
Exodus	Exodus 1.22, 2.3-5	Exodus 14-15	Exodus 19-24, 32-34

While the concept of covenant is vital to each of the texts in our thesis, its relationship to cosmic mountain ideology unduly broadens our theme and will not be discussed here. Understanding covenant as the context of worship, however, brings the two patterns into more obvious harmony, lending credibility to our own three-part scheme. This significant pattern, moreover, occurs no less than three times within the bounds of Exodus: (1) in Exod 2-3, Moses is delivered through the waters of the Nile and brought to Mount Horeb;¹⁶ (2) in the Song of the Sea in Exod 15, Israel is delivered through the Sea and brought to “the mountain of your inheritance/...the sanctuary, YHWH, your hands have established”; (3) and then, of course, the general movement of the book itself in Exod 14, 19-24 which, due to space considerations, will be the focus of our study here.

Given our contention that from a biblical-theological approach the exodus should be read and understood in light of creation/cosmogony (and not *vice versa*), the many intertextual parallels of the exodus with the creation and deluge accounts may yet support Frye’s insight, already quoted, that the exodus is the only thing that really happens in the Old Testament—this, however with two caveats. First, the exodus must be understood fundamentally as a cosmogonic movement before it is applied to the creation account (i.e., when “exodus” language is defined via a chaos → cosmos pattern).¹⁷ Second, precisely by maintaining the canonical approach

¹⁶ As explained earlier in the introductory chapter, while many years go by between the Nile deliverance and the removal of Moses’ sandals before the burning bush, the actual narrative time is rather brief. For the distinction between narrative or discourse time and narrated time, cf. J.P. Fokkelman, *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) 35-37.

¹⁷ With similar insight, M. Barker suggests the Song of the Sea in Exod 15 may utilize the language of an early creation myth (*The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* [1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008] 66).

(beginning with creation and progressing to the exodus), the exodus itself is thereby seen as the culmination of the cosmogonic pattern, that is, as “what really happens.” Accordingly, when the cloud of glory transitions from the summit of Sinai to the tabernacle holy of holies, the cultus of Israel is neither merely being established nor merely subsuming the mantle of the Sinai event. Rather, from the perspective of the Torah’s final redaction, the tabernacle cultus subsumes the mantle of Sinai as “culminating cosmic mountain,” a culmination that has been an accumulation throughout the narratives of Genesis—narratives, that is, with the ultimate purpose of explaining the significance and logic of the tabernacle cultus.¹⁸ As such, the narrative arc (and drama) traced from the beginning of Genesis to the conclusion of Exodus becomes manifest: from the divine Presence signified and lost in Gen 1-3 to the divine Presence regained via the tabernacle in Exod 40. We turn now to develop this idea by considering the narrative of exodus, as with the previous chapters, according to the cosmogonic pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, ending with a brief examination of the tabernacle cultus so as to see how it forms the literary and theological culmination of the preceding narratives.

I. THROUGH THE WATERS: EXODUS 14

A. *Death to Life-in-Egypt*

Considering the cosmogonic pattern as an “exodus,” the creation account involves an exodus from chaos to cosmos, the deluge account involves an exodus from old cosmos to new cosmos, and the exodus account, in its broadest context, involves an exodus from Egypt to Promised Land—that is, an “ecclesiological” (in its fundamental etymology as “called out assembly”)

¹⁸ To be sure, the relationship between the so-called “Sinai tradition” and Israel’s cultus has long been noted. See S. Mowinckel’s classic study, *Le Décalogue*, Etudes d’histoire et de philosophie religieuses, no. 16 (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1927), e.g., in which he posits cultic practices affected the Sinai tradition. Cf. W. Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, trans. S. Rudman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965) 145-67; S.E. Loewenstamm, “Sinai, ma’amad har sinai,” *Encyclopedia Biblica*, vol. 5, col. 1032 (Heb.) (Jerusalem, 1968). While this *may* be the case our biblical theological and canonical approach explores the reverse possibility. In any case, upon tracing traditions to cultic practice, one is still left with the further query: from whence the cultic practice?

exodus, a coming out from among the nations, as it were, to be a royal priesthood and holy nation.¹⁹ In this section, therefore, we want, via a literary reading, to bring out some of the ways the narrative emphasizes the distinction between Egypt and the sons of Israel, and the need for the latter to “die” to life-in-Egypt. The distinction between the two communities/camps will (as we will see in the next section) prove an eschatological one. As with the deluge, YHWH, water-controller and ordeal Judge, demonstrates once more his ability to meet out exacting justice.

With its ironic contrast and mounting tension, the pursuit scene has justly been described as a literary masterpiece.²⁰ Suspense grows as the reader “watches” what the unsuspecting sons of Israel cannot see (v 9), “the Egyptians with all the horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army”—the longest description of the enemy in the entire chapter.²¹ The focus shifts briefly in v 10 to the sons of Israel even while they lift up their eyes, then back to the Egyptian might as it bears down upon them, this time watching through the very eyes of the prey (הַמִּצֵּד). Israel thus “feared greatly” (וַיִּירָאוּ קָדָר), cried out to YHWH, and complained to Moses. The “murmuring”²² clearly manifests both Israel’s fear of death and the preference for slavery in Egypt over that death (vv 11-12):

“Is it because there were no graves *in Egypt*
that you have taken us away to *die in the wilderness*?”

¹⁹ There is a sense in which Egypt symbolizes *Sheol* and the Promised Land symbolizes the heavenly Mount Zion, but this will not be developed here.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

²¹ *Ibid.* Ska refers to the “parade-ground inspection” of Pharaoh’s army obliged upon the reader.

²² Cf. G.W. Coats, *Exodus 1-18*, 115; M. Vervenne, “The Protest Motif in the Sea Narrative (Ex 14.11-12): Form and Structure of a Pentateuchal Pattern,” *ETL* 63 (1987) 257-71; C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 114; W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 495; S.J. DeVries, “The Origin of the Murmuring Tradition” *JBL* 87 (1968) 51-58; B.S. Childs, “A Traditio-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition,” *VT* 20.4 (1970) 406-18; G.W. Coats, “The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif,” *VT* 17.3 (1967) 253-65; D. Patrick, “Traditio-History of the Reed Sea Account,” *VT* 26.2 (1976) 248-49. Patrick makes a plausible suggestion unpursued: “Perhaps, of course, the wilderness cycle never existed apart from the story of the exodus, but then it is of little moment whether the Reed Sea account belongs to the wilderness or exodus. In that case it would always have been what it is now, a transition from the one to the other” (248). T.W. Mann, at the least, is correct to state that “while the Sea may not be simply the climax to the plagues and the Passover, neither is it merely ‘the first in a series’ of crisis stories in the Wilderness theme” (“The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” *JBL* 90.1 [1971] 28).

What have you done to us, bringing us *out of Egypt*?
Is this not the word we spoke to you *in Egypt*
saying, 'Leave us alone and let us *serve Egypt*'?

For it would have been better for us to *serve Egypt*
than to *die in the wilderness*."

Syntactically, giving attention to the seven clause endings, the preference for Egypt over the wilderness is five to two.²³ The vacillation toward resolution is evident: "*in Egypt*" – "*out of Egypt*" – "*in Egypt*" → "*serve Egypt*" – "*serve Egypt*," along with the straw alternative "*die in the wilderness*" – "*die in the wilderness*." The first sentence sets up the contrast, while the last demonstrates the resolved choice, and the central three clauses hammer in the decision: "Egypt-Egypt-Egypt," and mark the desire to return: "out of – in – serve Egypt." Indeed, the Israelites very much *speak* as Egyptians:²⁴

Israel: What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt?...better to serve them (v 11)
Pharaoh/Egypt: What is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us? (v 5)

Next, and for the three rhetorical questions, Moses answers with three imperatives.²⁵ It is tempting even to see his answers as consecutively responding to their questions: to their fear of death, vacillation, and false assessment, Moses answers with (1) "do not fear," (2) "stand fast," and (3) "see the salvation of YHWH." The form of the three injunctions—assurance, directive, and prediction—may be classified as a "war oracle."²⁶ The direct speech of Moses, to be sure, drives to the heart of their enslavement, and of the drama itself (v 13): "Do not fear!"²⁷ The command is repeated verbatim (אל-תִּירָאוּ) when the people find themselves before the even more

²³ Cf. J.L. Ska, "The Crossing of the Sea," 40.

²⁴ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 226.

²⁵ Cf. C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 114.

²⁶ E.W. Conrad, *Fear Not Warrior: A Study of 'al tira' Pericopes in the Hebrew Scriptures* (BJS 75; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985) 143-45.

²⁷ Cf. B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 226. T.B. Dozeman (*Exodus*, 313) posits Moses' exchange with the Israelites as the center of a chiasm:

A The cry of the Israelites to Yahweh (v 10)
B The complaint of the Israelites to Moses (vv 11-12)
B' The response of Moses to the complaint (vv 13-14)
A' The response of Yahweh to the cry of Moses (v 15)

threatening event of YHWH's theophanic Advent at Sinai (20.20). Moses next calls upon them to "see" (וַיֵּרְאוּ) the salvation of YHWH, promising they will never again "see" (לֹא יֵרְאוּ) their enemies forever because YHWH will fight the battle on their behalf, this the "most basic tenet of Old Testament holy war."²⁸ But the faith requisite to conquer such fear is an obedient faith that journeys out to the sea as night and death approach. Here the sign and the signified swirl into one as the darkness and the sea, along with the armies of Pharaoh—that is, as *chaos*—threatens to fall upon and undo the sons of Israel.

Fundamental to the "exodus" movement here, then, is the choice between identifying with the chaos/old cosmos/Egyptians out of fear, or with the people of YHWH out of faith. Why allegiance to the camp of YHWH is so crucial will be made abundantly clear upon entering the waters.

B. The Waters of Creation and the "Rebirth" of Israel

"The most prominent use of the mythology of the sea," so notes Dozeman, "is to describe the exodus."²⁹ YHWH's control of the sea constitutes a creation theme. Creation themes pervade the book of Exodus³⁰ from the beginning as the sons of Israel experience creation blessing while the anti-creational Pharaoh and his Egypt receive talionic retribution, being destroyed by the forces of chaos, the threat of which are but the birthing pangs for the creation of Israel. The language of Ex 1.7, 12, 20 recalls the language of creation at the beginning of Genesis:

²⁸ D.K. Stuart, *Exodus* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006) 336. Cf. J. Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 172-82.

²⁹ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 299.

³⁰ T.E. Fretheim has been especially instrumental in emphasizing the creation theology so pervasive in the book of Exodus. Among other insights, he notes that (1) Exodus 1 sets up the issue as a creational one as Pharaoh seeks to subvert divine creational work; (2) the plague cycle demonstrates the cosmic effects of the conflict; (3) Egypt itself embodies the forces of chaos, threatening to undo God's creation; (4) the redemption itself is in the service of creation as its end; (5) the water and manna miracles in the wilderness are symbolic of the continuing creation activity of God reinvigorated by redemption; (6) Israel, in receiving the Law at Sinai, is addressed as humanity was on the sixth day; (7) the Tabernacle worship set up is an appropriation of the creational purpose (see his articles, "The Redemption of Creation"; "Because the Whole Earth is Mine," as well as his commentary on Exodus).

GENESIS 1.28	EXODUS 1.7
God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful (פָּרֹו) and multiply (וַיִּרְבּוּ), and fill (וַיִּמְלֵא) the land (הָאָרֶץ)...”	But the sons of Israel were fruitful (פָּרֹו) and swarmed (וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ), and multiplied (וַיִּרְבּוּ), and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land (הָאָרֶץ) was filled (וַיִּמְלֵא) with them.

The use of “swarm” (וַיִּשְׁרְצוּ) in 1.7 hearkens to its usage, three times, in Gen 1.20-21, and

“mighty” (וַיִּעֲצֹמוּ) may be intended as a subtle recall of the two-fold use of עָצָם in Gen 2.23.

Bypassing other examples, we turn to the obvious illustration of the plagues as YHWH’s

unleashing the forces of anti-creation/chaos upon the Egyptians until they suffer pre-creation

darkness and death:

The *most basic perspective* within which the plagues are to be understood is *a theology of creation*. ...Seen against this background, Pharaoh’s oppressive, anti-life measures against Israel are anticreational, striking at the point where God was beginning to fulfill the creational promise of fruitfulness to Israel (Gen 1.28; Ex 1.7). Egypt is an embodiment of the forces of chaos, threatening a return of the entire cosmos to its precreation state. The plagues may thus be viewed as the effect of Pharaoh’s anticreational sins upon the cosmic order writ large.³¹

J. Currid exposes how the plagues constitute a “de-creation” of Egypt:³²

Creation Day	Creation Description	Plague on Egypt	Plague Description
Day 1 Gen 1.1-5	Light created out of darkness	Plague 9 Ex 10.21-29	Darkness prevailing over light
Day 2 Gen 1.6-8	Ordering and separation of the waters	Plague 1 Ex 7.15-25	Chaos and destruction brought by the changing of water into blood
Day 3 Gen 1.9-13	Appearance of dry land and creation of vegetation	Plagues 7-8 Ex 9.18-10.20	Destruction of vegetation by hail and locusts
Day 4 Gen 1.14-19	Creation of luminaries	Plague 9 Ex 10.21-29	Darkening of luminaries
Day 5 Gen 1.20-23	Creation of birds, fish, and swarming creatures in the sea	Plagues 1-2 Ex 7.15-8.15	Death of fish; multiplication and death of frogs
Day 6 Gen 1.24-31	Creation of land animals and humans	Plagues 3-4 Ex 8.16-24 Plague 5 Ex 9.1-7 Plague 6 Ex 9.8-17 Plague 10 Ex 11-12	Pestilence of insects anthrax; boils on beasts and humans; destruction of firstborn

³¹ T. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 106-7 (emphasis original). See Fretheim’s remarks, along with general commentaries, on Ex 7.8-11.10. Similarly, B. Och writes: “The ten plagues symbolize a return to primeval chaos...” (“Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,” *Judaism* (1995) 226-43 (236).

³² J.D. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997) 115. See his review of the plagues in relation to the Creation account, 116-17.

The creation theme reaches its apex in Exod 14 and the sea crossing,³³ the climax of the exodus proper,³⁴ where the armies of Pharaoh are destroyed in the depths of the sea in the darkness of night while the sons of Israel emerge out of the sea upon dry land in the light of dawn. The separation of darkness and light, evening and morning; the division of the sea by the רִיחַ *rûah* of God; the emergence of dry land—all these aspects of creation unfold within the narrative, particularly in vv 20-22:

²⁰So it [the cloud] came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness [החֹשֶׁךְ], and it lit up [נִאָר] the night [הַלַּיְלָה]. Thus the one did not come near the other all night.
²¹Then Moses stretched out his hand upon the sea [הַיָּם], and YHWH drove back the sea with a mighty east wind [רִיחַ] all night and turned the sea into dry ground [לְתֶרֶבֶה], and the waters were divided [נִבְקְעוּ]. ²²The sons of Israel entered through the midst of the sea on the dry ground [בַּיַּבֵּשָׁה], and the waters were as a wall for them on their right hand and on their left.

Note how in the center of the central paragraph (vv 20-21), whose subject (as we delineate it) is “amidst the sea at night,” one finds three consecutive sentences ending with “the night” (הַלַּיְלָה):³⁵

נִאָר אֶת-הַלַּיְלָה
... כָּל-הַלַּיְלָה
... כָּל-הַלַּיְלָה

Now the “stage is set for the divine victory over the forces of chaos.”³⁶ God’s creating then begins, once more, with separation, first between the two camps³⁷ accomplished by the glory

³³ See T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 153: “It is the sea crossing that lifts up the cosmic side of the divine activity, bringing God’s creational goals to a climax. It is only as the sea that the forces of chaos are decisively overcome and the world is reestablished on firm moorings....It is a cosmic victory.” J.K. Buckner, *Exodus* (NIBC; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008) 129: “The luring of Pharaoh into the heart of sea revealed the Creator’s move to redeem creation and restore it to the Creator.” Cf. also B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 82.
³⁴ So M. Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary*, J.S. Bowden, trans. (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 104f; O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (BZAW 78; Berlin: Alfred Töpelman, 1959) 156; D.J. McCarthy, “Plagues and Sea of Reeds: Exodus 5-14,” *JBL* 85 (1966) 137-58. Cf. G.W. Coats’s critique of this view, “The Traditio-Historical Character of the Reed Sea Motif,” 253-65.
³⁵ Cf. U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 167. NOTE also how the preceding clause ends with “darkness” (החֹשֶׁךְ), and how the last two sentences (“all the night”) are further paralleled by consonance and assonance (אֶלְ- / אֶלְ-).
³⁶ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 158.
³⁷ Cf. N. Sarna, *Exodus*, 73. J.D. Currid interprets the separation as symbolic of the “children of darkness” and the “children of light” (*A Study Commentary on Exodus*, vol. 1 [Darlington, Eng; Auburn, MA: Evangelical Press, 2000] 300).

cloud.³⁸ This leads to the separation between darkness and light, as the cloud “shines light” for Israel while enshrouding the Egyptians in darkness,³⁹ a token for the complete cycle of deliverance which moves from evening (when Egypt is apparently triumphing) to morning,⁴⁰ the “first day” for liberated Israel. Perhaps most conspicuous, the mighty eastward “wind” of v 21, the instrument and manifestation of YHWH—indeed, perhaps it is “in this event above all others that the wind of Yahweh revealed its power,”⁴¹ parallels both the creation account in Gen 1.2 and the deluge in 8.1, signaling the shift from chaos to creation.⁴²

The imagery here, and even more powerfully in Exodus 15, is from the creation of the world in Genesis 1. It is a re-creation of part of the creation event, creating now a whole people who, for the first time in history both trust and fear the Lord together (v 31). Three phrases allude to the creation: as God’s spirit hovered over the waters (Gen 1.2) so Moses was told to raise his staff over the sea; as God separated the water (Gen 1.7) Moses’ action divided the water; and as God made dry ground (Gen 1.9) so the people would go through the sea on dry ground.⁴³

³⁸ If M.G. Kline’s proposal that the *rûah ʾlōhîm* in Gen 1.2 represents the glory cloud (see *Images of the Spirit* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999] 13-34), then similarities with the Creation account become more profound. T.B. Dozeman notes that the fire imagery likely symbolizes the divine Presence in the cloud, a common metaphor for divinity in the ancient Near East (*Exodus*, 310). T.W. Mann concludes that the pillar of cloud involves holy war imagery (“The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” 19-24).

³⁹ Cf. U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 167; J.K. Bruckner (*Exodus*, 133): “Its special feature was its darkness on one side, so that night prevailed for the Egyptians while ‘lighting up the night’ for the crossing of the sea on the Israelite side.” Darkness for the Egyptians with light for the Israelites is the traditional understanding of the verse (Cf. N. Sarna, *Exodus*, 73). For the military significance of the pillar, likened to a war palladium similar to the later ark of the covenant for the crossing of the Jordan, see T.W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative,” 26-27. For the Ark as palladium, cf. F.M. Cross, Jr., *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: J. Hopkins Press, 1998) 49f; M. Buber, “Holy Event (Exodus 19-27),” pp 45-58 in *Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations*, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987) 49-50, originally published in *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies by Martin Buber* (New York: Schocken, 1968). For the military theme in Exod 14-15, see S. Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) 20-21.

⁴⁰ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 45-46. T.B. Dozeman also notes how the Sea event is “carefully orchestrated by time,” from night into morning (*Exodus*, 316).

⁴¹ See R. Luyster, “Wind and Water: Cosmogonic Symbolism in the Old Testament,” *ZAW* 93 (1981) 1-10 (5).

⁴² M. DeRoche, “The *Ruah Elohim* in Gen 1.2c: Creation or Chaos?,” pp 303-18 in *Ascribe to the LORD: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, L. Eslinger, G. Taylor, eds. (JSOTSup 67; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) 314; J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 42. B. Och notes that the Sea crossing is a microcosmic reenactment of the original act of Creation as well as a miniature reenactment of the flood catastrophe (“Creation and Redemption,” 236).

⁴³ J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 132. W.H.C. Propp: “By drying or parting the Sea, he [YHWH] recapitulated his primordial deed, temporarily making more dry land” (*Exodus 1-18*, 559).

The word for “dry ground” (יַבְבָּשָׁה *yabbāšâ*) in vv 16, 22 connects the creation (Gen 1.9, 10), deluge (Gen 8.7, 14), and sea crossing accounts.⁴⁴ The “conquest” of the waters is evident by their being divided, allowing God’s people—as innocent Adam and righteous Noah before them—to walk dry shod upon the land, the waters being “as a wall for them on their right hand and their left” (vv 22, 29). That conquest may also be suggested by the special usage of חֲרָבָה (*ḥārābâ*, “wasteland”) in v 21, rather than the more common term יַבְבָּשָׁה (*yabbāšâ*, “dry ground”) found vv 16, 22, and 29. Bruckner notes how the word sounds like חֶרֶב (*ḥereb*, “sword”) suggesting this as the “sword” by which YHWH defeated Egypt.⁴⁵ Regarding now the “wall” of waters, the term חֹמָה (*ḥōmâ*) is often employed architecturally in Hebrew for the fortifications surrounding a city, further flavoring the text with a “conquest” nuance.⁴⁶ In light of the eastward orientation of ANE cultures, and because, “in the Bible, ‘right’ is also taken to mean ‘south’ (Josh 17.7; 1 Sam 23.19, 4; 2 Ki 23.13; Ps 89.13; Job 23.9), whilst ‘left’ corresponds with ‘north’ (Gen 14.15; Josh 19.27; Ez 16.46; Job 23.9),” Israel journeys between the walls of water to the east, leaving Egypt behind in the west.⁴⁷ In the ancient worldview, the sun “descended” into the darkness of death in the west along its circuit under the earth, regenerating itself in the primordial ocean so as to “resurrect” in the morning.⁴⁸ Passage through water, moreover, is “birthing language.”⁴⁹ The Israelites, thus, journey through the darkness and sea of death,

⁴⁴ Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 1, 302; M. DeRoche, “The *Ruah Elohim*,” 312.

⁴⁵ J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 133. One might compare the syntax of v 21: יָשָׁם...לְחֶרֶב with Jer 25.31 וְהָגָם לְחֶרֶב, and Micah 6.14 הָפַלְטָם לְחֶרֶב, “put/deliver to the sword.”

⁴⁶ Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 1, 302.

⁴⁷ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 43. Cf. N. Wyatt, “The Vocabulary and Neurology of Orientation: The Ugaritic and Hebrew Evidence,” pp 125-50 in *The Mythic Mind*; first published in *Ugarit, Religion and Culture: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Ugarit, Religion and Culture, Edinburgh, July 1994. Essays Presented in Honour of Professor John C.L. Gibson*, N. Wyatt, W.G.E. Watson, J.B. Lloyd, eds. (UBL, 12; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1996) 351-80.

⁴⁸ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 43-44.

⁴⁹ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 159. Similarly, E. Fox (*The Five Books of Moses* [New York: Schocken, 1995] 330): “The narrator was concerned to demonstrate God’s final victory and to portray Israel’s escape in terms of a birthing (through a path, out of water).....”

“beyond the grave” as it were, eastward into the dawn of rebirth. Meanwhile, the “Egyptians, like the corrupt and sinful generation destroyed by the deluge, remain in the waters of primordial chaos,”⁵⁰ in the west. As with the deluge, “what was done in Genesis 1 is undone with the plagues,” the returning of the waters at Moses’ command being “the ultimate creation reversal.”⁵¹ Indeed, “the waters returned” (וַיָּשֻׁבוּ הַמַּיִם) is repeated verbatim in both the deluge and sea crossing accounts (cf. Gen 8.3; Exod 14.26).⁵² The term “covered” (כִּסָּה) in 14.28, for the flood of waters that drowns the Egyptian chariotry, is also shared with the deluge narrative (Gen 7.19-20).⁵³ In the sea crossing, then, one finds both creation (Gen 1// Exod 14.16, 21) and deluge (Gen 6-9// Exod 14.26, 27). Moreover, and again as with the deluge, the event at the sea constitutes an “ordeal” whereby YHWH, as Judge, determines to save the righteous and destroy the wicked through the waters. Indeed, he had already defined the deliverance to Abraham in Gen 15.14 as judgment: “...the nation whom they serve I will judge (וְאֶתְּ דָּאֵן).” Later, in the first disclosure to Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3), YHWH’s theophany is set within the context of his role as Savior and Judge.⁵⁴ Thus the waters of destruction become the waters of salvation for the people of God (cf. 1 Pet 3.20). For the sons of Israel, the sea, so representative of threatening darkness and chaos, becomes orderly, divided and standing so that dry land appears, forming a way, a “path” (cf. Isa 43.16). The imagery of the waters transforms from a symbol of death to life.⁵⁵ Significantly, the symbolism of the waters follows the symbolism of darkness and light, for in v 27 “the sea returned” (וַיָּשֻׁבַּ הַיָּם) precisely at the “turn of the morning” (לְפָנוֹת בֹּקֶר)—note

⁵⁰ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 42.

⁵¹ P. Enns, *Exodus*, 274.

⁵² Cf. G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987) 184. C. Westermann links 14.16, 21 with the waters of Gen 7.11 (*Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, J.J. Scullion, trans. [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984] 433).

⁵³ Cf. K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26* (NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996) 380.

⁵⁴ Cf. J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai: Covenant and Theophany in the Bible and Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 24-25.

⁵⁵ Ska (“The Crossing of the Sea,” 44-45) refers to this as “antiphrasis,” a double negation that yields a positive meaning. He offers the cross of Christ, whereby the instrument of death and torture becomes a symbol of eternal life, as another example.

how “daybreak” interrupts the sequence: “the waters returned—at daybreak—to its original course.” The three paragraphs of the pericope, thus, follow roughly the three watches of the night: six to ten P.M., ten P.M. to two A.M., and two to six A.M.,⁵⁶ so that the overall progress of each unit may be traced in relation to place and time, whereby dusk, evening, and morning mark the advance toward, entrance into, and exit of, the sea:⁵⁷

- (1) towards the sea at dusk,
- (2) amidst the sea at night,
- (3) the other side of the sea at dawn.

Entering the waters, the sons of Israel die; emerging out of the waters, they are reborn. While the Egyptians are destined to have the sea as their end, Israel emerges out on the far side of the sea to discover life beyond death, even as night gives way to daybreak.⁵⁸ The initial separation by the pillar of cloud between the camps of Israel and Egypt proves to be soteriological—that is, between life and death, as evident in the threefold occurrence of *Israel – Egypt* in the final verse, v 31.⁵⁹ Egypt dies in the waters—that is, “God cuts off the Egyptians’ participation in the new creation”⁶⁰—whereas Israel dies and is reborn.⁶¹ Israel’s sea crossing is thus a “rite of passage,” separating the old life from the new.⁶² “Both in creation and exodus God wrought the

⁵⁶ Cf. N. Sarna, *Exodus* 74; J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 46.

⁵⁷ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 37-38.

⁵⁸ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 47.

⁵⁹ Cf. U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 172. The darkness upon the Egyptians portends their death even as the darkness of the ninth plague had prefaced the death of the firstborn (cf. P. Enns, *Exodus*, 275).

⁶⁰ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 160. B.F. Batto similarly states that Israel’s epic tradition has been cast so as to “make Israel march right through the middle of the ‘Sea of End,’” with Combat Myth language being used “to portray Israel’s emergence as a nation as a new creation” (*Slaying the Dragon*, 149).

⁶¹ W.H.C. Propp, e.g., notes that “water can symbolize both death and birth. Israel’s emergence from the Sea might be regarded as a rebirth or resurrection (compare Jonah 2). 1 Cor 10.1-2 aptly analogizes the Sea crossing with Christian baptism, itself symbolic of birth” (*Exodus 1-18*, 562).

⁶² W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 562. T.B. Dozeman demonstrates how A. van Gennep’s three phases of rite of passage transitions, (1) the act of separation from a social structure or cultural condition; (2) a marginal state, described as “liminal”; and (3) reincorporation into a new social structure (*The Rites of Passage*, M.B. Vizedom, G.L. Caffee, trans. [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1909] 15-25), correlate to the three-part structure of salvation history: (1) the exodus out of Egypt; (2) the wilderness; (3) the promised land (*Exodus*, 347-48). Cf. also F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 52-55.

impossible, and defeating the powers of the resisting enemy, brought forth new life.”⁶³ The whole ordeal, moreover, may be characterized as a judicial water ordeal, the “sea” being prominent from the very start:

^{14.1} Now YHWH spoke to Moses saying, ² “Speak to the sons of Israel, that they turn back and camp before Pi-Hahiroth,⁶⁴ between the Tower and the Sea, before Baal Zephon,⁶⁵ in front of it, you will camp by the Sea.

In summary, the “redemptive creation of Israel at the sea is cast in the same narrative style of original creation as the pillar of divine presence brings light into darkness (Ex 13.21, cf. the first creative day), the waters are divided (Ex 14.21, cf. the second creative day), and the dry land emerges (Ex 14.29, cf. the third creative day).”⁶⁶ Thus, Israel’s salvation via sea, wind, and

⁶³ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 238.

⁶⁴ Perhaps “Mouth-of-Freedom” (following *Mekhilta* [Beshallah, Wayehi, 1] and Targum of pseudo-Jonathan), presuming a contrived Hebrew word-play on “House of [the goddess] Hathor” (Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 108). Word-plays recur rather consistently throughout Exodus (cf., e.g., “Massah” and “Meribah” in W. Johnstone, “From the Sea to the Mountain: Exodus 15,22-19,2: A Case-Study in Editorial Techniques,” pp 245-63 in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation*, M. Vervenne, ed. [Leuven: Leuven UP, 1996] 248-49. Another example is the use of the root *kbd*: for the “heavy” labor imposed upon the sons of Israel, 5.9; the “glory” YHWH gains in victory, 14.4, 17; the “hardening” of Pharaoh’s heart, 7.14, 8.15, etc.; the chariots YHWH caused to drive “heavily,” 14.25. Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 1, 304). “Mouth” before the crossing thus gets rounded out with “lip” (v 30) afterward. While the location of this reference has proven elusive for modern scholarship, its importance has not: “The purpose of so precise a location, one that provides no less than *four* points of reference, not only suggests a historical base for the exodus route described in this narrative, but also implies that the directions so specified are important for an understanding of the narrative” (J.I. Durham, *Exodus* [WBC; Waco: Word, 1987] 186). Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 1, 286-87. It may be the points of reference have more to do with theology than geography, making the point that the sons of Israel are wedged between “death” and “idolatry”: Baal (*Idolatry*) in the NORTH vs. Egypt (*Death*) in the SOUTH, the Sea (*Death*) in the WEST vs. the Tower (*Idolatry*) in the EAST.

⁶⁵ Note the parallelism: *Tower – Sea // Baal Zephon – Sea*. For “tower,” cf. U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 160. That some sort of temple ziggurat is in view by use of “tower” may be surmised from the use of *migdol* in the “Tower of Babel” narrative, as well as from *zephon*’s referring to a holy mountain – Baal “Lord of [Mount] Zaphon” (cf. N.M. Sarna, *Exodus* שמור [Philadelphia: JPS, 1991] 71; N. Wyatt, “The Significance of *špn* in West Semitic Thought,” pp 102-24 in *The Mythic Mind*; first published in *Ugarit: ein ostmediterranes Kulturzentrum im Alten Orient*, M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, eds. [ALASP, 7; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995] 213-37). “Ugaritic finds have revealed that a common name for Baal was Baal-zephon, i.e., Baal of the North,” most probably referring to a Baal sanctuary, the water-separation motif also being a link to Baalism (F.E. Eakin, Jr., “The Reed Sea and Baalism,” *JBL* 86.4 [1967] 382; cf. J. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* [JSOTSup 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000] 107-16; O. Eissfeldt *Baal Zaphon, Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durch Meer* [Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1932]; N. Aimé-Giron, “Ba‘al Saphon et les Dieux de Tahpanhes dans un Nouveau Papyrus Phénicien,” *ASAE* 40 [1941] 433-60). “Yahweh works his greatest miracle opposite of Baal’s sacred city, even approaching Baal’s prerogatives as master and conqueror of the Sea” (W.H.C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18*, 491).

⁶⁶ W. Gage, *Gospel of Genesis*, 20-21.

earth, is an act of creation by God-the-Creator—salvation is *new* creation.⁶⁷ Given the creation theme, it

should not surprise us, then, to see that the descriptive language in chapter 14 takes us into the realm of cosmic battle. The defeat of the Egyptian forces is nothing less than the defeat of chaos, of the universal forces antithetical to life and represented in mythic terms by raging waters. The “dragons” and “leviathan” that are crushed when God divides the primordial sea—doing so brings about “salvation” in the world in Ps 74.12-17—here are the pharaoh’s armies. Crushing them brings redemption to the Israelites. The prose narrative echoes these mythic ideas, and the following Song gives resounding emotional expression to them.⁶⁸

The sea crossing deliverance not only parallels the account of creation, but the deluge event as well, for just as God “remembered his covenant” (Exod 2.24), sent “a strong east wind to dry up the waters before his people” (14.21), so they “walked through on dry ground” (14.21-22), so in the deluge account God “remembered” those in the ark (Gen 8.1), sent a “wind” (Gen 8.1), so his people might come out on “dry ground” (Gen 8.13-14).⁶⁹ Depicting God as water controller, allowing his people passage through the waters (eventually to his mountain) while consigning the Egyptians to destruction so that “not so much as one of them remained” (v 28), thus portrays the event in terms of the judicial river ordeal.

II. TO THE MOUNTAIN FOR WORSHIP: EXODUS 19-24

While all biblical theophanies represent crucial and decisive moments in history, Sinai alone qualifies as the preeminent theophanic revelation of God.⁷⁰ Worshiping God “at this mountain”

⁶⁷ J.L. Ska, “The Crossing of the Sea,” 42. T.E. Fretheim (*Exodus*, 159) writes: “The result is not simply historical redemption but a new creation.” J.K. Bruckner (*Exodus*, 133): “God used the basic components of creation: the pillar of cloud, fire, wind, water, dry land, light, and the cover of night.” Similarly, Dozeman notes that by paralleling the Red Sea crossing with Genesis 1, the event constitutes “an act of creation” with “universal significance” (*Exodus*, 304).

⁶⁸ C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 115-16. So, too, T.E. Fretheim notes: “This language is fundamentally liturgical and creational, portraying a struggle against the forces of chaos. It has its roots in the mythic divine battle against all that is anti-creation” (*Exodus*, 160). Cf. C. Houtman (*Exodus*, vol. 2, S. Woudstra, trans. [Kampen: Kok Publishing, 1996] 232). For the relation of the chaos myth to the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, see C.A. Simpson, “An Inquiry into the Biblical Theology of History,” *JTS* 12.1 (1961) 1-13 (7-9).

⁶⁹ J. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 127.

⁷⁰ J.K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 72. J.J. Niehaus calls the Sinai theophany “a touchstone for prior and subsequent glory theophanies in the Bible because the Sinai event was constitutive in Israel’s history and crucial in salvation history” (*God at Sinai: Covenant & Theophany in the Bible*

(3.12) being the sign given Moses by YHWH, all of the subsequent narrative, including the refrain, “Let my people go so they may worship me” (5.1; 7.16; 8.1, 20; 9.1, 13; 10.3), has been driving to Exod 19,⁷¹ to the shadow of the Mount equated by YHWH with worship. YHWH’s descent upon Sinai then became the pattern for worship, a similar consecration being required to approach his Presence at the tabernacle, the shofar utilized to imitate the sound of his advent (2 Sam 6.15; Ps 47.5).⁷² The imagery of the cloud further underscores the cultic setting of the theophany on the mountain.⁷³ After a brief consideration here of the place and form of Exod 19-24 within the overall exodus narrative, we will go on to examine: (A) Mount Sinai as cosmic mountain, (B) the underlying concept of the gate liturgy whereby Moses alone is able, Adam-like, to ascend the mountain of God, and (C) the relation of the altar to the divine Presence.

Structurally, Exod 19.1-2, utilizing an overcoding device whereby the initial temporal phrase is expanded by a preposed temporal clause, effectively bifurcates the book of Exodus, with the first half (Exod 1.1-18.27) setting the context for the events at Sinai.⁷⁴ Thus while the lack of a *waw* marks a “decisive break,”⁷⁵ yet the summary superscription itself serves to cast the

and *Ancient Near East* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995] 16. Assembling before Sinai became, further, the definitive assembly (קהל) for Israel (cf. R. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* [Nashville: Nelson, 1998] 806-09).

⁷¹ Cf. J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 171; C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 424.

⁷² J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 175. Bruckner notes the use of *halak* (“walk”) for the blast of the trumpet, giving a sense of YHWH’s deafening approach (176). This idea, the thunderous noise of YHWH’s advance, comports well with M. Kline’s understanding of the *qol* of YHWH’s approach in the Garden of Eden (*Images of the Spirit*, 102-06; *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2006] 129). Cf. also J.J. Niehaus (*God at Sinai*, 18, 155-59) who translates Gen 3.8 as “Then the man and his wife heard the thunder of Yahweh God going back and forth in the garden in the wind of the storm, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.” J. Van Seters (*The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994] 268) notes that trumpets are common in cultic liturgies.

⁷³ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 451.

⁷⁴ N. Winther-Nielsen, “Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai,” 4-5; A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 24; T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 208; J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 261. U. Cassuto also observes a shift, namely, the elevation of style, bordering on poetry, that marks 19.1 as treating of a new and sublime theme (*Exodus*, 223). C. Houtman explains the shift as serving to “arrest the reader’s attention” (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 439).

⁷⁵ J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 13-14.

previous material of chs 1-18 as a preface to the events at Sinai. Thus, our “→ to the mountain” aspect of the pattern is quite justified from the text itself.

The Sinai narrative of Exod 19-24 holds a central place in the Pentateuch and, from a literary and form-critical perspective, has been one of the most difficult and controversial areas within it.⁷⁶ More recent studies have tended to appreciate the careful composition of the Sinai pericope.⁷⁷ Niccacci, for example, who divides the Sinai narrative into three sections (19.1-20.17/ 20.18-23.33/ 24.1-18) by the verb forms used, considers Exod 19-24 a “straightforward complex” comprising:⁷⁸

⁷⁶ J. van Seters, “Comparing Scripture with Scripture’: Some Observations on the Sinai Pericope of Exodus 19-24,” pp 111-30 in *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Breward Childs*, G.M. Tucker, et. al., eds. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) 111. What’s more, “there has never been a consensus on source division in the Sinai pericope” (J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 115), and likely never will, so that Lothar Perlitt’s statement (*Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969] 181), regarding Exod 24 in particular, still rings true, namely, that one may as well assign sources “by flimsy oracle” (“durch Losorakel”). J.I. Durham considers the Sinai narrative “the one most reworked passage in the Bible” (*Exodus*, 259). Similarly, D. Gowan says “the structure of Exod 19-24 presents more unanswerable questions than any other part of the Old Testament” (*Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994] 173). Y. Avishur summarizes the broad consensus when he writes that Exod 19-24 “is replete with repetitions, contradictions and unevenness, and these have been tackled by all methods available to biblical scholarship –source criticism, literary criticism, tradition criticism, as well as by independent approaches of scholars. Scholars have come up with many proposals to explain the repetitions, solve the contradictions, and smooth the unevenness, in an attempt to pinpoint the original story or stories and the different editing stages by the various schools of thought before the narrative reached its present formulation. Matters have reached such a pass that some scholars have despaired of finding any order at all in the composition of the tale as it stands” (“The Structure of the Narrative of the Revelation at Sinai (Exodus 19-24),” pp 173-96 in *Studies in Biblical Narrative: Style, Structure, and the Ancient Near Eastern Literary Background* [Israel: Archaeological Center Publication, 1999] 173). While Avishur accounts for perceived contradictions by maintain variant sources of tradition, he satisfactorily explains the repetitions by the chiasmic principle. For a survey of literary and form-critical analysis of the Sinai pericope, cf. B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 337-73, 451-64, 499-509; E.W. Nicholson, “The Decalogue as the Direct Address of God,” *VT* 27 (1977) 422-33; *idem.*, “The Covenant Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8,” *VT* 32 (1982) 74-86; H.H. Schmid, *Der sogenannte Jahwist* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1976) 83ff; A. de Pury, E.T. Römer, eds., *Le Pentateuque en question. Les origines et la composition des cinq premiers livres de la Bible à la lumière des recherches récentes* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1989); R.N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study* (JSOTSup 53; Sheffield: JSOT, 1987). For an overview of the problematic aspects specifically of Exod 19, see C. Houtman, *Exodus, Vol. 2: Exodus 7.14-19.25* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996) 427.

⁷⁷ See E. Galbiati, *La struttura letteraria dell’Esodo: Contributo allo studio dei criteri stilistici dell’A.T. e della composizione del Pentateuco* (Alba: Cuneo, 1956); M. Greenberg, “The Book of Exodus,” *EncJud* 6 (1971) 10-56; J. Licht, *Storytelling in the Bible* (Jerusalem, 1978) 19; G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” *Biblica* 68 (1987) 457-79; D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath: The Sabbath Frame of Exodus 31.12-17; 35.1-3 in Exegetical and Theological Perspective* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 94-96.

⁷⁸ A. Niccacci, “Workshop: Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24,” pp 203-28 in *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible: Papers of the Tillburg Conference*, E. van Wolde, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 224.

- (1) a promise by the God of the exodus from Egypt of establishing a special relationship with Israel on condition of keeping the divine will;
- (2) a theophany aimed at inspiring on the people the awe of God and of Moses his envoy;
- (3) the Ten Words and the Covenant Code as the basis of the covenant;
- (4) the ratification of the covenant.

Broadly, and also manifesting coherence, the literary structure of the Sinai narrative forms a chiasm:⁷⁹

- A Narrative: conversation with Yhwh, visibly present on Sinai (19.1-25)
- B Laws: Ten Commandments (20.1-17)
- C Narrative: Moses mediates between Yhwh and the people (20.18-21)
- B' Laws (20.22-23.33), including book of the covenant (21.1-23.19)
- A' Narrative: conversation with Yhwh, visibly present on Sinai (24.1-18)

The Sinai “complex” may be extended, however, beyond the bounds of chs. 19-24, as the miraculous waters from the mount at Horeb-Sinai in Exod 17 have been demonstrated to be of a piece with cosmic mountain ideology.⁸⁰ Indeed, the resolution of the narrative is that, due to the miraculous supply of water, it has become evident YHWH, who may even be described as the source of water,⁸¹ is “in our midst” (v 7), precisely the significance of the river of Eden.⁸²

⁷⁹ J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 170. Cf. J.M. Sprinkle, “Law and Narrative in Exodus 19-24,” *JETS* 47.2 (2004) 235-52 (242).

⁸⁰ See W.H. Propp, *Water in the Wilderness*, esp. 59-61, who also argues persuasively that the “rock” (*šûr*) of Horeb must denote the “mountain” of Horeb or part of it, as “in most biblical attestations” (21-22, 60) –indeed, the term may relate to the appellation “El Shaddai”; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in *By Study and Also By Faith*, vol. 1 in *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (1990), accessed at: <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63>, who makes the connection of Ex 17 with Lunquist’s proposition (“What is a Temple?” 208) that the “temple is often associated with the waters of life which flow forth from a spring within the building itself –or rather the temple is viewed as incorporating within itself or as having been built upon such a spring.” J. Blenkinsopp extends the Sinai-Horeb narrative to ch. 34 (“Structure and Meaning in the Sinai-Horeb Narrative (Exodus 19-34),” pp.109-25 in *A Biblical Itinerary: In Search of Method, Form and Content; Essays in Honor of George W. Coats*, E.E. Carpenter, ed. [JSOTSup 240; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997]). T.E. Fretheim, further, is correct in pointing out that, thematically, the narrative begun in 19.1 of Exodus is not completed until Numbers 10.10 (“Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 230. Exod 19.1-Num 10.10 is framed, moreover, by Israel’s desert experiences, Exod 15.22-18.27 and Num 10.11-20.13 (cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 32). G.C. Chirichigno (“The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” *Biblica* 68 [1987] 457-79) also notes that chs 19-24 are but one unit within the larger account of Exod 19 to Num 10 (457). Based on syntax analysis, A. Niccacci remarks that the “end of Exodus 24 is not the end of the text,” the narrative continuing through the end of Exodus (“Narrative Syntax of Exod 19-24,” 224). T.B. Dozeman is probably correct in stating that the drawing of water from the rock at Horeb, the divine mountain (17.6) and Jethro’s leading the Israelites in worship on the mountain of God (18.1-12) are foreshadowings of the “pivotal role of the divine mountain throughout chaps. 19-24” (*Exodus*, 411).

⁸¹ W.H. Propp, *Water in the Wilderness*, 10. Propp lists, in fn 10, the following refs.: Jer 2.13; 15.18 (negatively); 17.13; Ps 42.2; 63.2.

⁸² Cf. Gen 2.10-14; Pss 46.5; 65.10; and the discussion of this theme in the Creation chapter of this thesis. W.H. Propp also makes the connection of the water-in-the-wilderness motif with the description of the earth in Genesis

Niccacci also argues persuasively that the Sinai pericope does not end with the close of chapter 24 but extends to the end of the book of Exodus as a “continuous text centered around Mount Sinai.”⁸³ Yet the cluster of key words, like “mountain” and the verbs of ascent and descent, appearing almost exclusively in chapters 19 and 24, support viewing a narrower Sinai narrative unit (chs 19-24).⁸⁴ That chapter 24 rounds out the literary complex begun in 19 may be surmised by the evident literary frame whereby the key stem *d-b-r*, “to speak, word,” has a sevenfold use in each chapter, with the stem *y-r-d*, “to go down,” appearing seven times in chapter 19, and its antonym *‘l-h*, “to go up,” appearing seven times in chapter 24.⁸⁵ Dozeman proposes a thematic development in the account of revelation in chs. 19-24, positing the following parallel structure based on Covenant Proposal and Covenant Ceremony:⁸⁶

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Proposal of Covenant 19.3-8a</i>	<i>Covenant Ceremony 20.22-24.8</i>
The commission of Moses	19.3, “Thus you will say”	20.22b, “Thus you will say”
Call “to see” a past action of God	19.4, “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians”	20.22, “You have seen that I spoke to you”
Offer of covenant	19.5a, proposal: “If you obey my voice and keep my covenant”	20.23-23.19, law: Book of the Covenant (24.7)
Promise of reward	19.5b-6a, people: “You will be my personal possession”	23.20-33, land: “I will send my messenger before you...to bring you to the place”
Proclamation by Moses	19.7, Moses “called”	24.3a, 7a, Moses “called”
People’s acceptance	19.8a, “We will do”	24.3b, 7b, “We will do”

Noting parallels between Ex 19.2b-8a and 20.21-24.3, Alexander argues persuasively for greater literary unity in the Sinai narrative than has been acknowledged in the past.⁸⁷ In light of

2.4b-7a and the river in vv 10-14 (*Water in the Wilderness*, 12). T.B. Dozeman considers the question “Is Yahweh in our midst?” initiated in the water episode at Meribah (17.1-7), as the central theme of the second half of Exodus (*Exodus*, 46). Cf. also S.D. McBride, Jr., “Divine Protocol,” 27-29.

⁸³ A. Niccacci, “Workshop: Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24,” pp 203-28 in *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible: Papers of the Tilburg Conference 1996* (Biblical Interp. Series 29; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 225.

⁸⁴ Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 28.

⁸⁵ N.M. Sarna, *Exodus*, 150. For *d-b-r*, see Exod 19.62, 7, 8, 92, 19; 24.33, 4, 7, 8, 14. For *y-r-d*, Exod 19.11, 14, 18, 20, 21, 24, 25. For *‘l-h*, Exod 24.1, 2, 9, 12, 14, 15, 18.

⁸⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 442.

⁸⁷ T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus XIX 1-XXIV 11,” *VT* 49.1 (1999) 2-20. Alexander here expands and refines the work of D. Patrick (“The Covenant Code Source,” *VT* 27 [1977] 145-57). See also E.W. Nicholson’s discussion of Perlitt and Kutsch regarding elements of literary unity (“The Covenant

published texts regarding treaty negotiations and alliances from Mari, paralleling somewhat the pattern of ceremonies and rituals embodied in the Sinaitic covenant, appreciation for the underlying unity of the Sinai pericope has grown.⁸⁸

Thus, while our approach continues to be canonical, considering the final form of the text, and thematic, considering primarily the aspects of the Sinai narrative that expose cosmic mountain ideology, examining the Sinai complex (Exod 19-24) is justified from a form-critical perspective as well.

A. Mount Sinai as Cosmic Mountain

1. SINAI AS CENTRAL MOUNTAIN OF THE TORAH

There is a sense where the Mountain represents arrival, the journey's end, Israel having completed the narrative cycle of Moses' earlier pattern: Egypt – Waters – Wilderness – Sanctuary.⁸⁹ Thus through the cosmic waters the sons of Israel journey to find themselves, as Adam and Noah before them, at the cosmic mountain, gathered for worship.⁹⁰ Ock similarly writes:

Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8," VT 32.1 [1982] 77ff). Cf. also G.C. Chirichigno ("The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24," *Bib* 68 [1987] 457-79) who demonstrates that the "Sinai Pericope represents a coherent account of the theophany" (478).

⁸⁸ See F.H. Polak, "The Covenant at Mount Sinai in the Light of Texts from Mari," pp 119-34 in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume*, C. Cohen, et. al., eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004). Polak believes this "unity is intrinsic to the intertextual tradition of this pericope rather than artificially imposed by the redaction" (123). He posits, further, that what began as a *monolocal* ceremony was changed to a *bilocal* one in light of the people's reaction of fear (Exod 20.18-21). He thus describes the logic of the covenant ritual (132-33):

- (a) the Israelites are presented with a covenant proposal that is accepted;
- (b) they prepare for the meeting with the divine partner on the lower slopes of the mountain (for an intended *monolocal* ceremony);
- (c) they reel back in fear, and thus Moses ascends to the mountain to receive the covenant terms (having switched to a *bilocal* ceremony);
- (d) at the foot of the mountain, the terms are ratified by the entire community;
- (e) on the mountain, the Israelite delegation meets with the divine partner.

A. Niccacci ("Workshop: Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24," 224) posits a similar complex: (1) a promise by the God of the exodus from Egypt of establishing a special relationship with Israel on the condition of keeping the divine will; (2) a theophany aimed at inspiring in the people the awe of God and of Moses his envoy; (3) the Ten Words and the Covenant Code as the basis of the covenant; (4) the ratification of the covenant. For relation to Hittite literature, see G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *BA* 17.3 (1954) 50-76.

⁸⁹ L. Thompson, *Introducing Biblical Literature*, 99.

⁹⁰ Interestingly, T.B. Dozeman (*God on the Mountain*, 19) structures the Sinai pericope as (1) purification, (2) theophany of God on the mountain, and (3) sacrificial ritual at the base of the mountain. This cultic movement

The journey of man which began at the Garden of Eden moves on to its ultimate destination: Mount Sinai. The theophany at Sinai marks the culmination and fulfillment of God's creational plan. The encounter between God and Israel at Sinai can be seen as a return to beginnings, an iterative event which is a reenactment of the original encounter between God and man at Eden. For this purpose, God has created a new people to stand before Him at Sinai as Adam stood in His presence at Eden. What began at Eden is now completed at Sinai.⁹¹

Approaching the Mount is not only *via* the waters, but *in contrast* with the judgment of those waters, as Ps 78 (vv 53-54) exemplifies:⁹²

And he led them safely and they feared not but the *sea* covered their enemies/
and He brought them to his holy domain, the *mountain* which his right hand had created.

Thus, in the creation, deluge, and sea crossing narratives, the Waters symbolize death⁹³ while the Mountain symbolizes life mediated by the Presence of God,⁹⁴ the concentrated Presence of God.⁹⁵ Turning now to the latter theme, Dozeman notes the prominence of the mountain setting in Exodus 19-24:

It [the mountain setting] is underscored at the outset of the Sinai Complex [being mentioned in 19.2b, 3a], and it is referred to frequently throughout: twenty-one times the definite noun for mountain is used alone, with a preposition, or in construct with Elohim; the mountain occurs an additional fifteen times in construct with Sinai. The emphasis on the mountain setting distinguishes the Sinai Complex from Israel's other itinerary stops, as a geographical midpoint between Egypt and Canaan. However geography does not exhaust the important role of the mountain setting, for it also functions symbolically as a cosmic mountain....⁹⁶

follows broadly the pattern of waters → mountain → for worship, as seen in the larger Exodus narrative, as well as in the Deluge account.

⁹¹ B. Och, "Creation and Redemption," 238.

⁹² Cf. F. Polak, "Water, Rock, and Wood," 34: "The psalmist continues to contrast the drowning of the Egyptians with the settlement of the Israelites in Canaan." Polak speaks further about the "opposition" between water and mountain, the "contrast between the unfathomable depth of the primeval water and the immense height of the divine mountain" (36).

⁹³ The waters can only symbolize rebirth (for all who pass through them) *because* they first symbolize death –thus, everyone dies by the waters, the righteous alone are reborn. Baptism then means "exodus," an exit that is a dying to the Old Creation (for Noah)/ Egypt (for Israel) and an entrance into, and living for, the New. The ones who do not die to the old cosmos must then die *with* it (i.e., the wicked generation of Noah's day/ the Egyptian armies).

⁹⁴ M.R. Hauge, e.g., says the "holy mountain represents the divine reality" (*The Descent from the Mountain*, 99).

⁹⁵ L. Thompson, *Introducing Biblical Literature*, 99.

⁹⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 12-13. Similarly, F. Polak states: "The revelation on the divine mountain, whether Sinai or Horeb, represents the theophany in all its aspects. As a concrete, audible and visible revelation of the divine presence, this scene is even more intense than the scene at the burning bush....the encounter of God and man, as symbolized by the ascent 'on' the mountain" ("Theophany and Mediator," 129, 135). G.C. Chirichigno also notes how the narrator (in 19.3-8a) "quickly averts the reader's attention to the mountain, where Moses ascends and God descends" ("The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24," 464). Cf. also M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain: Narrative Pattern in Exodus 19-40* (JSOTSup 323; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 21-24. For the mountain theme in Exodus, see R.L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space: Four Biblical Studies* (AAR Studies in Religion 4; Chico: Scholars Press, 1981) 43-61.

As of chapter 19, the rest of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and Numbers 1.1-10.11, all—some 58 chapters at the center of the Pentateuch—takes place at Mount Sinai.⁹⁷ The “Ringstruktur” of Exod 15.22 – Num 21.18, proposed by A. Scharf, also highlights the significance of Sinai within the Pentateuch:⁹⁸

- | | | |
|---|---------------|--|
| A | Exod 15.22-25 | transformation of water from bitter to sweet |
| B | 17.1-7 | water from the rock |
| C | 17.8-16 | Amalekite-Israelite war |
| D | 18 | leadership relief for Moses |
| E | 18.27 | the Midianite Hobab, Moses' father in law |
| F | 19.1-2 | arrival at Sinai |

SINAI

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| F' | Num 10.11-23 | departure from Sinai |
| E' | 10.29-32 | the Midianite Hobab, Moses' father in law |
| D' | 11 | leadership relief for Moses |
| C' | 14.39-45 | Amalekite-Israelite war |
| B' | 20.1-13 | water from the rock |
| A' | 21.16-18 | the spring |

Within chs 18-40, the term “the Mountain of God” (הַר הָאֱלֹהִים) and its synonyms are used forty times in what amounts to “clear theological usage.”⁹⁹ Exod 19.18 alone refers to the mountain three times, with unusual personification (Mount Sinai “trembled,” וַיִּתְרַדּוּ wayyeh^ʿrad) that underscores its cosmic quality.¹⁰⁰ The setting of the divine mountain itself may be considered a central theme of the pericope.¹⁰¹ Structuring the narrative around the mountain is in keeping with the “theological concern for sacred space.”¹⁰² Sinai stands, quite literally, at the center of the wilderness journey, with six stations between Egypt and Sinai, and six stations following

⁹⁷ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 208; C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 142; C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 426, 437.

⁹⁸ A. Scharf, *Mose und Israel im Konflikt: Eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Studie zu den Wüstenerzählung* (OBO 98; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) 52.

⁹⁹ E. Carpenter, “Exodus 18,” 107.

¹⁰⁰ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 457; *idem.*, *God on the Mountain*, 102-03 and fn 47. The unusual personification is evident by the LXX's change so that the text reads “the people” trembled (457).

¹⁰¹ Cf. T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 411. G.W. Coats (*Exodus 1-18*, 102, 104) refers to the Sinai material as a structuring fulcrum. M.R. Hauge notes: “From the very beginning of Exodus 19, the reader is impressed by the mountain imagery in the Sinai stories” (*The Descent from the Mountain: Narrative Patterns in Exodus 19-40* [JSOTSup 323; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001] 21).

¹⁰² F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 46.

Sinai to the plains of Moab.¹⁰³ At the center of the coordinated narrative of Exod 19.1 through Num 10.10 stands “the peak of the mountain itself, where Moses negotiates on Israel’s behalf the decisive self-revelation of Yahweh in Exodus 33.12-34.9.”¹⁰⁴

2. SINAI AS CENTRAL MOUNTAIN OF THE CULTUS

As the locus of the decisive self-revelation of YHWH, to approach Sinai, then, is to enter the sphere of the cult, for “Israel celebrated liturgically on the sacred mountain in the house of the Lord.”¹⁰⁵ The encounter at Sinai was a cultic one, the blast of the ram’s horn, for example, signaling the Presence of Yahweh in the worship of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 6.15; Ps 47.6 [5]),¹⁰⁶ and the threefold division of the Mount being later reflected in the tabernacle construction. It is thus with good reason that Durham labels the Sinai pericope as the “Advent of Yahweh’s Presence.”¹⁰⁷ Exod 19 has even been considered “the enthronement of God on the mountain.”¹⁰⁸ The factor most determinative for the form of the entire Sinai narrative, the “supreme event of Exodus,” so Durham rightly states, is:

of course the gift by Yahweh of his Presence to Israel. From beginning to end, and in both its positive and its negative features, the Sinai narrative sequence, and indeed the Book of Exodus of which it is the important center, is linked to the Advent of Yahweh’s Presence to Israel at Sinai.¹⁰⁹

The reason for the dominating role of Sinai, then, is precisely because the essential relationship of YHWH to Israel is disclosed via cosmic mountain ideology,¹¹⁰ that is, Sinai “provides the

¹⁰³ R.J. Clifford, “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” 113.

¹⁰⁴ S.D. McBride, Jr., “Divine Protocol: Genesis 1.1-2.3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch,” pp 3-41 in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, W.P. Brown, S.D. McBride, eds. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) 27. Cf. idem., “Perspective and Context in the Study of Pentateuchal Legislation,” pp 53-55 in *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present, and Future. Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, J.L. Mays, et. al., (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995). Thus rightly called by B. Baentsch, “das Herz- und Kernstück des Hexateuchs” (*Exodus-Leviticus-Numeri* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1903] 169).

¹⁰⁵ R.J. Clifford, “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” 120.

¹⁰⁶ J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 270-71.

¹⁰⁷ J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 256. The full title is: “The Advent of Yahweh’s Presence and the Making of the Covenant (19.1-24.18).”

¹⁰⁸ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 456.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 260. Similarly, C. Houtman (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 425) refers to the event as the “unexcelled and irresistible majesty of his appearance.”

framework of the ultimate religious experience.”¹¹¹ Indeed, that Sinai is one of the most important cosmic mountains in Israel’s history is widely acknowledged.¹¹² Some even argue that Sinai, upon which God revealed the “true *tabnît*, the sanctuary which served as a model for all the replicas, especially the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem,” is thereby the true “mountain of God,” the God whose oldest surviving appellation may have been *זֶה סִינַי* *zeh sînay* “the One of Sinai”¹¹³ (cf. Judg 5.5; Ps 68.8[9 Heb]). If it is true, further, that Sinai “was the precursor and prototype of later Israelite sanctuaries,”¹¹⁴ as at least a canonical reading suggests, then the possibility is open for the pre-Sinai cosmic mountains to function similarly in as much as they are eventually subsumed under Sinai’s mount. As the locus for the revelation of the heavenly *תַּבְנִית* *tabnît*, for the gradations of sacred space, for the giving of the tablets of the covenant, for the source of miraculous waters, for sacrifice, and for the sacral, communal meal, Sinai would seem to qualify as the cosmic mountain of Israel *par excellence*, subsuming the

¹¹⁰ J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 18.

¹¹¹ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 26. His full quote is relevant: “This is added to by the connection of the mountain imagery and temple categories. Given the function of temple motifs as the traditional expression for the ‘reality apart’, it is even possible to regard the encounter scenes with Moses as individual applications of a typical situation usually connected with temple categories. With such a background, Moses could represent the ideal religious figure, while the mountain scene provides the framework of the ultimate religious experience.”

¹¹² See, e.g., G.A. Anderson, “The Cosmic Mountain,” 192; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament*, 98; idem., “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” p 107-24 in *The Temple in Antiquity: Ancient Records and Modern Perspectives*, T.G. Madsen, ed. (RSMS 9; Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1984); J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 15-86; D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God.” Parry rehearses Lundquist’s propositions (“What is a Temple?”) to demonstrate Sinai’s role as a cosmic mountain. As Lundquist’s first proposition makes clear, the temple is “the architectonic embodiment of the cosmic mountain,” so that whatever attributes of a temple there may be they are so precisely and only in as much as the temple is symbolic of the mountain itself.

¹¹³ D.N. Freedman, “Temple Without Hands,” 28-29, 21. So, too, J.M. Lundquist: “The conceptions of Zion as a holy mountain go back ultimately to the inner-Israelite experience at what is probably *the* holy, cosmic mountain of religious literature, Sinai” (“What is a Temple?” 207; emphasis original). At the least, T.E. Fretheim is correct in noting that the immediacy of the theophany at Sinai was a unique divine appearance unparalleled in the OT (*Exodus*, 214).

¹¹⁴ D.W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God.” This is, of course, the fundamental proposition of Lundquist (“What is a Temple?”). That being the case, the attributes he goes on to delineate regarding temples are true first and foremost of cosmic mountains. Thus, it would be more accurate to attribute, first, the same propositions to cosmic mountains, then to offer the most fundamental proposition last, namely, that the temple is an architectonic representation of the cosmic mountain (and therefore inherits the attributes of sacral space, etc.).

previous cosmic mountains as their anti-type.¹¹⁵ Dozeman notes that Sinai becomes the mountain of revelation upon the descent of the Glory of YHWH, where he reveals the two tablets of testimony (31.18; 34.2, 4, 29, 32), the sacrifices (Lev 7.38), the Sabbatical Year (Lev 25.1), the Holiness Code (Lev 26.46), the remaining laws within Leviticus (Lev 27.34), and the legislation concerning the daily offerings (Num 28.6).¹¹⁶ Thus “Mount Sinai, the mountain of law-giving, stands in the Canaanite tradition of the cosmic mountain.”¹¹⁷ Given, next, that the tabernacle is constructed as a portable Sinai (as will be argued below), then a convincing case is made for the function of the cosmic mountain narratives in Genesis and Exodus as being liturgical, that is, as explaining the logic and significance of the tabernacle and later temple.¹¹⁸ In as much, however, as the tabernacle/temple is copied after the תִּבְנִית revealed to Moses atop Mount Sinai, the tabernacle/temple itself points to the reality of the heavenly Mount Zion. Thus, as Clifford states:

The historical exodus has become a type of a life entrusted to God. The mountain is the goal of pilgrimage, of the final rest after the escape from the dominion of evil. The mountain of God in the beginning has become the mountain of God at the end.¹¹⁹

B. *The Gate Liturgy*

According to our liturgical reading of the creation account, Adam is shown as the man who must *descend* the mount of YHWH, cherubim barring the entrance to fallen Man. In his prelapsarian

¹¹⁵ Cf. R.L. Cohn (*The Shape of Sacred Space*, 54) who refers to Sinai as representing preeminently the *axis mundi* (sacred space) and the *illud tempus* (sacred time).

¹¹⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 430.

¹¹⁷ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 4. The Canaanite cosmic mountain “Zaphon is the scene of frequent banqueting” (61) which is another line of similarity with Sinai (Ex 4.9-11). For the Sinai traditions, cf. 107-23; Donald W. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” in *By Study and Also By Faith*, Vol 1 in *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (Provo, Ut: BYU Press, 1990) 482-500. Further, Lundquist’s eleventh proposition regarding temples states: “Sacral, communal meals are carried out in connection with temple ritual, often as the conclusion of or during a covenant ceremony” (“What is a Temple?,” 215).

¹¹⁸ This narrative intention, incidentally, does not diminish claims to historicity –quite the reverse in as much as real significance derives from true explanation.

¹¹⁹ R.J. Clifford, “The Temple and the Holy Mountain,” 123.

state, however, he is first described as one placed/brought to rest (נוח Gen 2.15) in the mountaintop garden of Eden, the first “Holy of holies” as it were. Taking a similar reading of the deluge account, it was noted how Noah, righteous and blameless as he was (cf. Ps 15), is consistently portrayed as one able to enter the temple-like Ark, and so also the Ararat mount. We turn now to consider how Moses is portrayed in the Sinai narrative primarily in terms as the only one able to ascend the holy mountain of God.

1. MOSES AS NEW ADAM

As Exodus 19 and 24 portray Moses’ ascension of Mount Sinai to YHWH, it is quite possible that Moses is to be viewed as a new Adam entering the paradisiacal Presence of God. In the last chapter Noah’s presentation as Adam *redivivus* was noted, so that it may not be irrelevant here to provide a sketch of how Moses is himself presented as something of a “Noah *redivivus*” and, thus, also as a new Adam.¹²⁰ Moses’ birth narrative in Exodus 2.1-10, to be sure, has many parallels with the Deluge account: while others are presumably drowned in the Nile, the infant Moses is delivered via the “ark” (תִּתְּכָה), the only other use of the term outside the Flood narrative. However, a further parallel occurs in 32.7-10 where we read that the Israelites have “corrupted themselves” (שָׁחָתוּ 32.7; cf. Gen 6.11), having “turned aside quickly from the way (בְּמַהֲרָם 32.8; cf. Gen 6.12)” which YHWH had commanded. After his investigated judgment (“I have seen” [רָאִיתִי], “Look!” [וְהִנֵּה] 32.9; cf. Gen 6.12), YHWH resolves to do with Israel and Moses what he had already once done with the world and Noah, namely, to destroy all the people and to begin afresh (v 10), making out of Moses a “great nation” (גּוֹי גָּדוֹל).¹²¹ Further, given all

¹²⁰ For parallels between Moses and Noah, particularly with reference to covenant, see R. Rendtorff, “Noah, Abraham and Moses: God’s Covenant Partners,” pp 127-36 in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*, E. Ball, ed. (JSOTSup 300; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 134ff.

¹²¹ Thus T.E. Fretheim posits that God here would have been starting over with Moses as “a new Abraham” (*Exodus*, 258).

the plays on Noah's name in the Deluge account, it is perhaps not insignificant that what YHWH commands of Moses in v 10 may also be a subtle play on *Noah*: "Now therefore, let me rest/ *comfort-to-me* (הַגִּידָה לִּי)....," reaffirming "the root נוח, as his ultimate decision to "repent" of the intended slaughter (וַיִּנָּחֶם...עַל-הָרָעָה, 32.14) reaffirms the root נחם."¹²² Then, in 33.17 YHWH says of Moses: "...you have found (מָצָאתָ) grace (חֵן) in my eyes (בְּעֵינַי)," an unmistakable comparison with Noah of whom we read: "But Noah found (מָצָא) grace (חֵן) in the eyes of (בְּעֵינַי) YHWH" (Gen 6.8).¹²³ Thus, both Noah and Moses are pivotal figures in a turning "from judgment for the past to hope for the future (Gen 8.1; Exod 33.11)."¹²⁴ Moberly's comparison is worth quoting in full:

This striking similarity between the flood and Sinai, between Noah and Moses, is of great theological significance for the interpretation of each story. For each story is a critical moment. First for the future of the world, then the future of Israel is in the balance. The world, while still in its infancy, has sinned and brought upon itself Yahweh's wrath and judgment. Israel has only just been constituted a people, God's chosen people, yet directly it has sinned and incurred Yahweh's wrath and judgment. Each time the same question is raised. How, before God, can a sinful world (in general) or a sinful people, even God's chosen people (in particular), exist without being destroyed? Each time the answer is given that if the sin is answered solely by the judgment it deserves, then there is no hope. But in addition to the judgment there is also mercy, a mercy which depends entirely on the character of God and is given to an unchangingly sinful people. And not only this. Both Ex 32-34 and the flood narrative contain another theological paradox that God's mercy...is yet mediated through a man. Obviously the role of Noah as mediator is rudimentary in comparison with that of Moses, yet it is Noah's special position that ensures that man will not be totally destroyed (Gen 6.8), God remembering Noah is the turning point of the story (Gen 8.1), and God responds to the acceptable sacrifice of Noah as to the prayer of Moses (Gen 8.20f).¹²⁵

Furthermore, and if the last chapter's suggestion regarding the ark as tabernacle/temple be accepted, both Noah and Moses construct sanctuaries and altars, the plans being revealed by God exclusively to each. "Moses, then, is another Noah whose career inaugurates a new epoch."¹²⁶

¹²² H. Marks, "Biblical Naming and Poetic Etymology," *JBL* 114.1 (1995) 29.

¹²³ Among the several parallels between Gen 1-9 and the book of Exodus T.E. Fretheim delineates is that between "Noah and Moses (see 2.1-10; cf. 33.12-17 with Gen 6.8)" ("Because the Whole Earth is Mine," 231).

¹²⁴ R.W.L. Moberly, *The Theology of the Book of Genesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 118-20 (120).

¹²⁵ R.W.L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34* (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT, 1998) 92.

¹²⁶ K.A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11.26* (NAC: Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996) 363.

Beyond these similarities,¹²⁷ however, are the cosmic mountain ideological correspondences whereby each figure, having gone through the waters, approaches the deity atop a mount, the meeting place between heaven and earth—that is, both stand in the footprints of Adam.

2. THE HOLINESS OF SINAI

Coming now to the Sinai narrative, we begin by noting the emphatic holiness of the mount manifested by the narrative in a five-fold manner:

- (1) the warnings against approaching/touching the mount (19.12-13, 21, 23-24; 24.2);
- (2) the theophany upon the mount (19.16-19; 20.18; 24.16-17);
- (3) the tri-partite division of the mount into bands of holiness (top – 19.20; 24.12, 16-18; mid-section – 19.24; 24.1-2, 9-15; base – 19.12, 17);
- (4) the need for consecration (19.10-11, 14-15, 22);¹²⁸
- (5) the need for a mediator (19.3, etc.).¹²⁹

The holiness of God, we will see, is the narrator's emphasis in chapter 19.¹³⁰ The people must be set apart, become "holy," so as to enter the Presence of God at the Mount which is itself "treated like the Holy of Holies."¹³¹ The holiness of God's immediate Presence is one of the themes that, though occasionally hinted at in the patriarchal theophanies, is primarily developed in Exodus.¹³² Indeed, Dozeman notes not only that the motif of holiness is central to Exodus, but that related

¹²⁷ R. Rendtorff brings out further parallels between Genesis and Exodus, noting how "in both cases, the first gift of God (creation/covenant) is endangered by human sin and threatened to be destroyed because of God's wrath. In both cases God changes his mind because of (the intercession of) one man (Noah/Moses)" ("Covenant' as a Structuring Concept in Genesis and Exodus," *JBL* 108 [1989] 393).

¹²⁸ The need for consecration also includes the blood rite described in 24.3-8, for, as Nicholson points out, "blood conveys holiness to that with which it comes into contact," so that the rite, and more precisely the covenant it seals, is a "matter of Israel becoming Yahweh's holy people" (E.W. Nicholson, "The Covenant Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8," 83). One purpose of the covenant ritual is "to create a community united in worship" (J. Blenkinsopp, "Structure and Meaning," 124).

¹²⁹ The need for and legitimization of a mediator is one of the themes of the narrative. J. van Seters refers to as a "standard Yahwistic theme" ("Comparing Scripture with Scripture," 113, 120).

¹³⁰ G.C. Chirichigno, "The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24," 476, 479. He further notes the correspondence to the "concern for holiness...expressed in the theophany in Exod 3 where Moses was warned not to come near Yahweh and was asked to remove his sandals, for the ground he was standing on was holy ground (v 5). In this respect, the theophany in Exod 3 may be seen as a biblical analogy to the theophany in Exod 19" (476).

¹³¹ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 217. Cf. C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 459.

¹³² D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath: The Sabbath Frame of Exodus 31.12-17; 35.1-3 in Exegetical and Theological Perspective* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009) 86-7. See Timmer's discussion on "Holiness at Sinai (Exod 19-Num 10)," 88-98. For the divine Presence as the major theme of Exodus see G. Henton Davies's commentary *Exodus* (TBC; London: SCM Press, 1967).

terms occur over eighty times—and that mostly in the setting of the mountain of God, beginning with 3.5.¹³³ He further states:

The key for interpreting repetition in Exodus 19-24 is the setting of the mountain, not the development of the plot or the unfolding chronology of the story. The repeated trips by Moses relate the two worlds of heaven and earth in the setting of the divine mountain. The result is a narrative that is spatial in form whose aim is to address the central theme of holiness.¹³⁴

Structurally, vv 10-25 contain several parallel concentric patterns that isolate the bounding of the mountain in relation to the people’s meeting with God:¹³⁵

- vv 10-15

A Go to the people (10b)
B consecrate them today and tomorrow (10c)
C let them wash their garments (10d)
D let them be ready for the third day (11)
X *set bounds for the mountain...do not ascend the mountain* (12-13)
A’ Moses descended from the mountain to the people (14a)
B’ he consecrated the people (14b)
C’ they washed their garments (14c)
D’ Be ready for the third day (15b)
- vv 16-19

A there were thunder and lightning flashes (16b)
B thick cloud on the mountain (16c)
C a very loud trumpet sound (16d)
D ...all the people in the camp trembled (16e)
X *Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God* (17)
A’ Lord descended upon Mt Sinai in fire (18a)
B’ smoke ascended from it (18b)
D’ the whole mountain trembled (18c)
C’ the sound of the trumpet grew louder (19)
- vv 20-25

A Moses ascends from the people (20)
B Yhwh speaks to Moses:
Descend the mountain/priests/Yhwh break out against them (21-22)
X *Moses replies: The people cannot ascend Mt Sinai... ‘Set bounds around the mountain’* (23)
B’ Yhwh speaks to Moses:
Descend the mountain/priests/Yhwh break out against them (24)
A’ Moses descends to the people (25)

Thus the people’s coming before God at the foot of the mount in v 17 is literarily “bounded” by the twofold warning in vv 12-13 and 23, framed as a chiasm: (a) set bounds, (b) do not ascend // (b’) cannot ascend, (a’) set bounds. The set-apartness of God requires a set-apartness on the part of those

¹³³ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 411. R.D. Nelson notes “The intense holiness at the center of the sanctuary was produced by the active presence of God there” (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993] 27).
¹³⁴ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 433-34.
¹³⁵ Cf. G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 467-68, 476; T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 17. Cf. U. Cassuto (*Exodus*, 233) that the repetition of the bounds in v 23 serves “(a) to stress still further the thought that the boundary between the two spheres, the human and the Divine, is not be effaced; (b) that it was necessary to repeat the warning at the crucial moment when the Revelation was about to take place (see Mekhilta). It may also be added that the triple reference to an important subject (vv 12-13; 21-22; 24) accords with a common literary practice.”

who would approach. To be sure, the mountain setting itself, with God at the summit and the people at the foot, with Moses mediating in between, serves to underscore the distance between the sacred and the profane.¹³⁶ Dozeman outlines vv 16-19 as a chiasm, highlighting the meeting of the people with YHWH at the mountain (C, C'):¹³⁷

- A The sound of the horn (*qōl šōpār*) v 16a
- B All the people (*kol-hā'ām*) tremble (*ḥarad*) v 16b
- C The people approach the mountain v 17
- C' Yahweh descends on Mount Sinai v 18a
- B' The entire mountain (*kol-hāhār*) trembles (*ḥarad*) v 18b
- A' The sound of the horn (*qōl haššōpār*) v 19a

The holiness of the mount itself, moreover, is directly related to the Presence of YHWH (cf. also Ex 3.4-6).¹³⁸ As Cross has noted, the “primary locus and normative form of the theophany of

¹³⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 418.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 449.

¹³⁸ Cf. A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 132: “Sinai became holy because of God’s [P]resence, and it was fenced in so as to avoid any violation of its sanctity by the Israelites.” Cf. J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 265, 272; C. Houtman, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 451; J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 25-6. Because even the Cosmic Mount functions to some degree as a symbol for YHWH’s Presence, “a signifier of divine cultic presence” (T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 15), Cosmic Mountain ideology/ Temple theology may be subsumed under the broader “theology of the Presence of God.” Indeed, as J. van Seters points out in his review of Dozeman’s work (*JQR* 82.3/4 [1992] 583-85): “The symbol of the cosmic mountain becomes a way of discussing the continuities and discontinuities of a theology of divine presence through various redactional stages.” Dozeman further notes how the Cosmic Mountain form of theophany dominates Exod 19-24, and how the genre of divine theophany, particularly on the mountain, “plays a central role in developing the theme of divine presence in Exodus” (*Exodus* [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009] 4-5). J.W. Hilber also underscores the centrality of the divine Presence, particularly in Ex 24 as the climax of that theme throughout the book of Exodus: “The presence of Yhwh stands out as the most distinguishing feature of the covenant relationship. Divine presence ‘characterizes’ the covenant relationship in the sense that God’s presence is the benefit of the covenant (with all that his presence means for the worshiper’s protection and subsistence)” (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” *JETS* 39.2 [1996] esp. 177-78[184]). F. Polak demonstrates how the theophany theme (also a subset of the theology of God’s Presence) “dominates the entire book of Exodus. This overarching theme makes its first appearance in the revelation of Moses at the burning bush (Exod 3-4), reaches its climax in the Sinai theophany and comes to its final completion in the revelation to Moses on the mountain (chs. 33-34). The book closes with the descent of the cloud on the ‘Tent of Meeting,’ as the radiance of the *kabod* fills the tabernacle (40.34-35)” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 113). Theophany, again under the broader category of the divine Presence, continues then in YHWH’s dwelling in the sacred cultic site of the Tabernacle, a theme at the heart and center of ancient Israelite religion (see R.E. Clements, *God and Temple* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965]), for there is a close relationship between the themes “Theophany on the Mountain” and “Sanctuary of God,” and, indeed, the construction of “Yahweh’s sanctuary is central for developing the theme of the divine presence in the second half of Exodus” (T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 6-7). The theophany theme, then, “stands at the center of the book as a whole, and permeates all traditions, sources and redaction layers” (“Theophany and Mediator,” pp 113-47 in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation*, M. Vervenne, ed. [Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996] 113). Further, E.G. Newing (“A Rhetorical and Theological Analysis of the Hexateuch,” *SEAJT* 22 [1981] 1-15) argues that the structure of the Hexateuch places the central focus upon the divine Presence in the Tent at Mount Sinai (Exod 33.1-17), specifically “mediated through the face to face encounter with Moses and represented realistically in the Covenant Law written on the tablets of stone” (11; see his diagrams

on pp 8-9). J. Jeremias (*Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* [WMANT 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965] 107-11) characterizes the oldest form of theophany in ancient Israel as consisting of (1) God's approach in a time of crisis, and (2) storm imagery as nature's reaction to that approach, both parts featuring in Exod 19-24. E.C. Kingsbury, who notes the considerable contribution of the theophany *topos* to the understanding of Israel's cultic background, refers to Exod 19 as "the theophany *par excellence* for Israel" ("Theophany *Topos* and Mountain of God," *JBL* 86.2 [1967] 207). To be sure, the Mount of Eden itself was "holy because God's presence was found there," the eastward orientation also alluding to that Presence in as much as the "Hebrew for *east* means 'faceward or frontward'; thus, driving Adam from before his face is part of the continuing eastward movement" (D. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," pp 126-51 in *Temple of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, D. Parry, ed. [Provo, UT: FARMS, 1994] 126, 134), illustrating the divine Presence to be fundamental to any biblical theology. A.C. Leder also notes the Presence theme at the end of Exodus: "Unlike the rest of Adam's descendants who continue life outside of God's presence, these children of Adam and Abraham are beginning to enjoy the presence of God again and to do the work for which all of Adam's descendants were created" ("Reading Exodus to Learn," 19). As the background and context to Exodus, Genesis demonstrates a progressive "loss" of the divine Presence. While he does not relate the phenomena to the divine Presence per se, G. Nicol does note the progressive change in God's activity throughout the three major sections of Genesis: in the Primaeval History (chs. 1-11), God appears as a character among characters; in the Patriarchal Narratives (12-36), He appears in dreams at holy places; and in the Joseph Story (37-50), He has more of a hidden influence ("Story-Patterning in Genesis," pp 215-33 in *Text as Pretext: Essays in Honor of Robert Davidson*, R.P. Carroll, ed. [JSOTSup 138; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992] 215. Nicol also points out the patterning of the Tower of Babel after the expulsion from the Garden [226-29] so that one may detect a continuation of the theme of the progressive distancing of humanity from the divine Presence even in the "new creation" after the Deluge). This movement may even be tracked somewhat geographically in Genesis as the narrative begins with the paradisaical summit of Eden's mount and ends with the descent to *Sheol*-like Egypt, preparing for the theme of the divine Presence in Exodus. J.I. Durham aptly sums up the book of Exodus in relation to Presence: "With Yahweh's Presence promised, then demonstrated, then given to Israel in theophany at Sinai, the first half of Exodus ends. The second half of the book is preoccupied with response to that Presence, in life, in covenant, in worship, and even in disobedience. The largest part of that second half has to do with the communication to Israel of the reality of that Presence, through a series of set-apart places, set-apart objects and set-apart acts, all of them intimately connected, in one way or another, with Yahweh's Presence. This final chapter [40] sums up the symbolisms of those places, objects, and acts, then recounts the fulfillment of the ideal of the Exodus theology of the Presence: Yahweh among his people, not in his mighty deeds, or in his rescue, or in his provision, or in his guidance, or in his judgment, or at a distance on a forbidden and foreboding mountain, but there in their midst; the symbol of his nearness visible to all, and all the time, Yahweh protecting and guiding, Yahweh teaching and blessing; Yahweh's Presence settled in Israel's center, Yahweh's Presence filling their Holiest Space, Yahweh's Presence in their living place, wherever it might be, and when; Yahweh's Presence in them" (*Exodus*, 501). For the theology of the Presence of God, see W. Brueggemann, "Presence of God, Cultic," pp 680-83 in *IDB*, Supp. Vol., K. Crim, ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976); R.E. Clements, *God and Temple: The Idea of the Divine Presence in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965); B.A. Levine, "On the Presence of God in Biblical Religion," pp 71-87 in *Religions in Antiquity*, J. Neusner, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1968); S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978); L. Brisman, "On the Divine Presence in Exodus," pp 105-22 in *Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations*, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987). Brisman offers a particularly helpful look at the theme of the mournful loss of the divine Presence in Exod 33 with God's mercy demonstrated by his acceding to Moses' request to allow his *panav*, his face, to accompany Israel rather than an angel (116-21). For the Presence as expressed by the Hebrew term "face" *panim*, which occurs more than twenty times in Exod 32-34, see H.C. Brichto, *Toward a Grammar of Biblical Poetics: Tales of the Prophets* (Oxford: Oxford U Press, 1992) 117; J. Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 264. Further, because the "wind is the most potent manifestation of Yahweh's divine presence" (R. Luyster, "Wind and Water," 4), the Creation (Gen 1.2) and Deluge (Gen 8.1) fall within the scope, along with Exod 14-15, of theology of the Presence. Extending the theology of the Presence to the eschatological hope of the Hebrew and Christian canons, Isaiah 65-66, taken up by the Apocalypse of John, presents the hope of life within the full divine Presence of YHWH in the cosmic temple of the New Creation (cf. D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle*, 149).

Yahweh is found in the episode at Sinai.”¹³⁹ In light of the overall narrative pattern of the book of Exodus, as summarized particularly in the Song of Exod 15, Cross is also correct to position YHWH’s theophany within the pattern of the deity’s return to his Cosmic Mount after victory, there revealing himself as the enthroned king—that is, the theophany begins “not at Sinai, but at the sea.”¹⁴⁰ The mount is holy not only because of YHWH’s Presence, but simply because it has been set apart for it. Thus we see that in vv 10-13, before the theophanic Presence, Moses is ordered to put to death by capital punishment any who touch the mountain, but in vv 20-25, that is, after YHWH’s arrival, YHWH himself will “break out” against the violators.¹⁴¹ Further, and as Alexander has noted, “the dominant issue in the dialogue between Yahweh and Moses [in 19.20-25] is the holiness of the mountain.”¹⁴²

3. “WHO SHALL ASCEND?”

Holiness being one of the chief attributes of the Cosmic Mountain, with access to its summit barred, the cultic question naturally arises: “*Who* may ascend the mountain of God?”

Significantly, then, we find that Moses is continually described as one—the only one—who *is* able to ascend. The poetical¹⁴³ Exod 19.3 strikingly states:

וּבְשֹׁהַ עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים

¹³⁹ F.M. Cross Jr., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 163. So too C. Houtman refers to the “extraordinary manifestation and presence of Yhwh” that was “holy beyond words” (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 460).

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 163-64.

¹⁴¹ Cf. T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 19.

¹⁴² T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative in Exodus XIX 1-XXIV 11,” *VT* 49.1 (1999) 18. Alexander also notes on the same page that by “commanding Moses to warn the Israelites against ascending the mountain, God implies that some of them at least tend towards disobedience rather than compliance. Significantly, this will be highlighted later when they construct the golden calf (Ex 32.1-8).” This presumption, then, manifests itself in the failure to consider what may perhaps be called the most significant question of worship in the Bible, i.e., “Who may ascend?” Cf. M.R. Hauge, who parallels the people’s wish for the divine presence “in front of us” with the divine intention to “dwell in the people’s midst” (*The Descent from the Mountain*, 63-4). Hauge also notes the parallels between the Golden Calf episode and the worship of ch. 24 (66-70). A.M. Rodriguez, further, points out that the use of שָׁחַת in the narrative, also used for unfit sacrifices/priests (cf. Lev 22.25; Mal 1.14; 2.8), portrays the rebellious people “like a defective animal or disqualified priest, unable to come into God’s Presence” (“Sanctuary Theology in Exodus,” 139).

¹⁴³ D.K. Stuart (*Exodus*, 421) mentions, e.g., the metrical balance and parallelism throughout, by syllables: 10/10/2/7/7.

But Moses ascended to God...

The *vav* is justly interpreted as disjunctive inasmuch as the line “is not given as a consequence of the preceding situation which, in this case, depicts the children of Israel setting up camp in the wilderness” so that here the focus shifts by way of contrast between the action and the person.¹⁴⁴

Indeed, the contrast between the people encamped around the mountain who are to “guard” themselves so as not to “ascend the mountain (עֲלֹת בְּהָר) or touch its base” (Exod 19.12) and Moses who ascends the mountain continues throughout the narrative, and is one of the many parallels Alexander delineates between 19.3 and 20.21:¹⁴⁵

A contrast is made between Moses’ ascent to Yahweh (Ex 19.3; 20.21) and the people remaining at the foot of the mountain (Ex 19.2b; 20.21); in both cases this contrast is marked by a break in the *waw*-consecutive sequence, and by naming the subject, Moses, prior to a perfect verb.

Further, whereas the *wayyiqtol* form of עָלָה *‘ālā* would have been utilized for mere sequential action in historical narrative, the *qatal* appears to function as “pinning an attribute” on the subject, so that the subject appears in focus (versus the action)—that is, Moses’ identity is manifest as an “ascender” to God.¹⁴⁶ In any case, the point is made both by repetition (Moses’ repeated ascensions) and by contrast (the repeated injunctions against the peoples’ ascending the mount). Verse 20, for example, reads:

Then YHWH descended upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain (אֶל־רֹאשׁ הַהָר). And YHWH called Moses to the top of the mountain (אֶל־רֹאשׁ הַהָר), and Moses ascended (וַיַּעַל).

¹⁴⁴ B. Rocine, *Learning Biblical Hebrew: A New Approach Using Discourse Analysis* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 93. The *x-qatal* construction is a part of this focus-shifting. Cf. U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 225-26; B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 366; M.R. Hauge (*The Descent from the Mountain*, 30) who translates: “Moses, however, ascended.” C. Dohmen, *Exodus 19-24* (HThK.AT; Friburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004) states: “Inhaltlich bedeutet es, dass Mose nicht irgendwann auf den Berg aufgestiegen ist, sondern der Aufstieg steht dem Lagern des Volkes an der Seite” (54).

¹⁴⁵ T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 4. J.I. Durham also points out the text’s emphasis upon the unique role of Moses here (*Exodus*, 272-73).

¹⁴⁶ B. Rocine, *Learning Biblical Hebrew*, 21: “The *qatal* verb form gives an attribute to the subject of the verb.” Cf. the bibliography provided by Rocine in fn 2 of same page. Thus Rocine himself translates the nuance of Ex 19.3 as “But Moses was a goer up to God” (93).

Note the emphasis on the “head” (רֹאשׁ) of the mountain as the particular locus of YHWH’s descending Presence, a feature not only consonant with the general ANE concept of the cosmic mountain, but particularly relevant with reference to the holy of holies in the tri-partite structure of the tabernacle. The summit, in contrast with the foot of the mountain, is the locus of theophany.¹⁴⁷ Also note how once more, lest Moses’ prerogatives result in presumption on the part of Israel, the people are immediately warned in the following verse (21) not to follow Moses’ approach.¹⁴⁸ The contrast is explicit in v 23 as Moses, speaking from the heights of the mount, states what may be considered the primary danger involved in the worship of YHWH:

לֹא-יִרְכַּל הָעָם לָעֲלוֹת אֶל-הַר סִינַי

The people *are not able* to ascend the Mount of Sinai.

“The people are not able to ascend the Mount” raises the question: Who *is* able to ascend the Mount?¹⁴⁹ Evidently, Moses is quite able. As Mediator between God and the people, he is able to ascend to God whereas the people may not, *and* able to descend to the people whereas God may not (lest they perish). Indeed, keeping up with Moses’ ascents and descents is “one of the main problems of Exodus 19.”¹⁵⁰ There are three principle “characters” in the Sinai narrative:¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 233.

¹⁴⁸ Although one might argue, based on the birth narrative of Moses (Exod 2.1-10), that Durham overstates his point, he nonetheless expresses the emphasis upon Moses’ (unexpected or “dislocated”) mediatorial role well: “Most of the narrative of Exodus from chap. 7 to this point has involved the proof to Israel of the Presence of Yahweh in the mighty acts in Egypt, the guidance through the wilderness, the deliverance at the sea, the provision and protection *en route* to Sinai, and the bringing of Israel to himself at Sinai. All the preparation of Israel, finally *at* Sinai, has been to the end that *they*, and no one else, might be ‘completely ready’ to encounter Yahweh on that most important ‘third day.’ The boundaries that have been set up are for *Israel’s protection* in the midst of an experience of rendezvous. *Israel* is made ready for holiness. *Israel* is commanded to ritual purification and cultic abstinence. *Israel* is brought by Moses from the camp to the perimeters of safety at the base of Sinai, there to meet and be met by Yahweh. Then, suddenly, just at the very moment when the experience of Yahweh so longed for has arrived, Moses, represented throughout the narrative as eagerly longing for Israel to know it, is suddenly thrust into the center as the sacerdotal/prophetic intermediary between Yahweh and his people” (*Exodus*, 269). Cf. B.S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 108-12.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 48-9.

¹⁵⁰ A. Niccacci, “Workshop: Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24,” pp 203-28 in *Narrative Syntax and the Hebrew Bible: Papers of the Tilburg Conference 1996*, E. van Wolde, ed. (Biblical Interp. Series 29; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 217. Niccacci proposes resumptive techniques to account for the repetition.

¹⁵¹ G.C. Chirichigno, “The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 460. Chirichigno thus delineates the narrative interaction into five rhetorical elements: MU – Moses goes up to the mountain; YM – Yahweh address Moses; MD

YHWH, the people of Israel, and Moses who, as the “go-between,” mediates between the two.¹⁵²

Winther-Nielsen, utilizing discourse-pragmatic analysis, delineates vv 16-19 as the climax of the narrative, focusing on Moses’ role as mediator, conversing with God.¹⁵³ The singular role of Moses, to be sure, is a matter of emphasis throughout the entire Sinai narrative:

The emphasis on the mediatorial role of Moses and the need for distance between God and the worshippers in Exod 24.1-2 echoes motifs from the two divine speeches that were addressed to Moses in Exod 19.20-25, when Israel and the priesthood were forbidden to ascend the mountain while Moses was singled out as an acceptable mediator. In Exod 24.1-2 the danger of the cosmic mountain is again underscored, so that in the end only Moses is allowed to approach God.¹⁵⁴

Throughout chapter 19, Moses is thus continually ascending and descending to maintain the dialogue between YHWH and Israel, vv 20-25 in particular displaying this role with a palistrophe:¹⁵⁵

- A Moses ascends from the people (v 20)
- B Yhwh speaks to Moses (vv 21-22)
- C Moses replies (v 23)
- B’ Yhwh speaks to Moses (v 24)
- A’ Moses descends to the people (v 25)

Thus Dozeman, who sees the function of Sinai’s symbolic cosmic mountain role as disclosing the essential relationship of YHWH to his people, writes:

The opening verses of the Sinai Complex would certainly appear to encourage a study of the symbolic role of the mountain setting, since it is used as the focal point for introducing the main characters, and since it continues to be a central structuring device throughout the Sinai Complex. Note, for example, how Yahweh and Israel are introduced in Exod 19.1-3a as stationary characters, who are carefully juxtaposed to each other at the summit and base of the mountain, while Moses is presented as the one who moves vertically between the two parties as he explores the spatial relationship between them. And note how this interrelationship between characters in the setting of the mountain continues to be a structuring device throughout the Sinai Complex, especially with regard to the movement of Moses. His movement up and down the mountain yields the following scenes: Exod 19.1-8a (Proposal of Covenant); Exod 19.8b-19 (Theophany); Exod 19.20-20.20

– Moses comes down from the mountain; MP – Moses addresses the people; PM – the people answer/address Moses. Based on this analysis, he divides the pericope into three episodes: (1) Exod 19.3-8b; (2) Exod 19.8c-20b; 20.18-21; (3) Exod 19.20c-25; 24.1-8.

¹⁵² Cf. M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 29, 31.

¹⁵³ N. Winther-Nielsen, “Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai,” 10-11. For Moses’ special role, see B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 351-60.

¹⁵⁴ T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 109.

¹⁵⁵ T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 17. To Alexander’s scheme we have merely added “from the people” (as evident from v 17) and “to the people” (v 25b) to bring out Moses’ role as mediator. G.C. Chirichigno notes how the rhetorical pattern of 19.3-8a also brings out Moses’ privileged status in communicating with YHWH (“The Narrative Structure of Exod 19-24,” 464.

(Decalogue); Exod 20.21-24.11 (Book of the Covenant); Exod. 24.12-32.35 (Tabernacle); Exod 34.1-35 (Covenant Renewal).¹⁵⁶

Exod 20.18-21 may serve as a summary of Moses' role in the peoples' relationship to YHWH. After witnessing the thundering, lightning flashes, trumpet sound, and fuming mountain, the trembling people say to Moses, "You (אַתָּה) speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die" (19). The account then closes with a characterizing summation in v 21:

וַיִּצְמַד הָעָם מֵרָחֹק
So the people stood afar off
וּמֹשֶׁה נִגַּשׁ אֶל-הָעֲרָפֶל אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם הָאֱלֹהִים:
but Moses drew near to the dense darkness there where God was.

Again one finds the contrast between the people and Moses, standing versus drawing near, "afar off" versus "there" (שָׁם) in the Presence of God. The spatial relationship is demarcated linearly with reference to the mount, standing afar off being at the foot/lowest part of Sinai while drawing near¹⁵⁷ having reference to the head/summit.

We turn now to Exodus 24, which may be considered "the climax of the covenant-making experience that was formally initiated when YHWH descended on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19),"¹⁵⁸ whereby the "sealing of the covenant, first announced in Exod 19.3, is brought to consummation in Exodus 24, and the response of the people in 19.8 is reaffirmed in 24.3, 7."¹⁵⁹ The correspondence is brought out structurally, as observed by Sarna: an *inclusio* is formed by the sevenfold use of the stem דבר *dbr* both in chs 19 and 24, and by the sevenfold use of the stem ירד *yrd* in ch. 19 which is counterbalanced by the matching use of the antonym עלה *ly* in ch

¹⁵⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 13-14. For the cultic symbolism of the cosmic mountain, Dozemen cites J. Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*; T.L. Donaldson, *Jesus on the Mountain* (JSNTSup 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 3.

¹⁵⁷ It is perhaps not insignificant here to point out that the spatial idea of "drawing near" (נִגַּשׁ; LXX εἰσῆλθεν), finding its basis first in the cosmic mountain setting and later applied within the Tabernacle cultic liturgy, becomes something of a technical term for worship. Cf. Heb 10.19-22 where entering (εἰσοδόν) the Holy of holies in the heavenly Mount Zion is equated with drawing near (προσερχόμεθα).

¹⁵⁸ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 177.

¹⁵⁹ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 177 and fn 4; B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 502-503.

24.¹⁶⁰ Exod 24, to continue, reaffirms the demarcation of space as, in the first verse, Moses is called to “ascend” (עָלָה), along with Aaron and his sons, and seventy elders¹⁶¹ of the people, and worship from “afar” (מֵרֶחֶק). While seventy-four men are called to worship YHWH from afar it is significant that the imperatival “ascend” is masculine singular, reserved as it were for Moses the “ascender” *par excellence*. The stark contrast is evident at the outset, 24.1: “But to Moses, he [God] said, ‘Ascend to YHWH.’”¹⁶² Indeed, the point is immediately underscored in a threefold manner (v 2):¹⁶³

וְנִגַּשׁ מֹשֶׁה לְבַדּוֹ אֶל־יְהוָה
 And Moses **alone** may draw near to YHWH
 וְהֵם לֹא יִגָּשׁוּ
 but they [the elders, Aaron and his sons] must **not** draw near,
 וְהָעָם לֹא יַעֲלוּ עִמּוֹ
 and the people are **not** to ascend with him.

¹⁶⁰ N.M. Sarna, *Exodus*, 150; also noted by J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 177 fn 4.

¹⁶¹ The round number seventy likely suggests a complete representation of all Israel (cf. Ex 1.5) as a new creation among the nations (cf. Gen 10 where the Table of Nations is represented by seventy tribes), and may have ritual significance within the context of sacrificial feast in the ancient Near East. Cf. J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 180 with fn 15; as ref. by Hilber: S.G. Vincent, “Exegesis of Exodus 24:1-11” (unpublished paper, 1984) 6.

¹⁶² Cf. T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 563.

¹⁶³ Exod 19.13 presents the only case in the narrative where the term for ascend with reference to the mountain appears positively in the third masculine plural: “When the trumpet blast sounds long, they may ascend (יַעֲלוּ) the mountain.” Polak keenly notes that it “is not easy to bring this statement in accordance with the preceding restrictions” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 134). The perceived incongruity of the pericope is typically resolved by source-critical analysis. Considering, however, the final form of the text, with its emphasis on the necessity for Moses as mediator, we simply note that v 13 is mitigated by the ensuing description of the people’s merely being brought to the foot of the mountain (v 17), along with the explicit interpretation of that ascent being via Moses alone (vv 20-25), and by the use of the verb, with precisely the same inflection, but with the particle of negation here in the *inclusio* of 24.2 where we read the prohibition that the people are not to ascend (לֹא יַעֲלוּ). The *Mekilta* of R. Ishma’el interprets the injunction of 19.3 as relating directly to the account of Moses’ ascent with the seventy elders in 24.1, 9 (cf. F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 134) –thus, a “federal” interpretation ultimately expressed via Moses’ role as mediator. For another option, that of a deliberate blurring and ambiguity, see M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 47-48. N. Winther-Nielsen, using discourse-pragmatic analysis to identify 19.16-19 as the peak of the narrative, posits the prohibitions in vv 21-24 as the major dramatic reversal resulting from that peak, i.e., there is a dramatic and logical change rather than a contradiction (“Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai”). Since approaching any mountain involves some level of ascent, Bruckner affirms the NIV’s interpretation that the people are to climb “up to the mountain,” i.e., up to *the foot* of the mountain, thus removing any supposed contradiction (*Exodus*, 179).

This is balanced by ch 19's "three negative purpose clauses prohibiting the people to ascend the holy mountain and approach the presence of God (19.21c, 22b, 24d), otherwise they will perish (19.21d)."¹⁶⁴ Niccacci writes:

Thus, with a three-stage going up—Moses went up with the chosen group (24.9), with Joshua (24.13, 15), and finally alone (24.18)—the command of 24.1 is fully executed. The delaying effect of the narrative is powerful and the tension becomes higher and higher. The inaccessibility of God and the mediatorial role of Moses are forcibly stressed.¹⁶⁵

Here three gradations of holiness, or "levels of nearness,"¹⁶⁶ are evident, accessed by Moses, the elders with Aaron and his sons, and the people. This tri-partite division of the mount into bands of holiness will later be reflected in the tabernacle.¹⁶⁷ The holy mount, then, does not mirror the tabernacle, but quite the reverse: the tabernacle is patterned after the mountain.¹⁶⁸ This is part of chapter 24's stress on the centrality of God's Presence via covenant "as it is symbolized and experienced in worship."¹⁶⁹ Notice also once more that, while the priesthood and elders are allowed partially up the mountain, so that the people may have justly been barred from ascending particularly "with-them," yet the verb is again restricted to Moses so that the people are barred from "ascending with-*him*" (יַעֲלוּ עִמּוֹ). Whether the people's prohibition is in view (v 2) or the partial allowance of the priesthood and elders (v 1), Moses alone is *the* ascender.¹⁷⁰ "The divine mountain," writes Hauge, "is ascended by the extraordinary human actor, leaving the rest of

¹⁶⁴ N. Winther-Nielsen, "Toward the Peak of Mount Sinai," 15.

¹⁶⁵ A. Niccacci, "Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24," 224.

¹⁶⁶ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 180. Hilber continues: "The people remain at 'the foot of the mountain,' where the ceremony takes place (v 4). Moses and the others 'come up' for the communal meal (vv 9-11). Only Moses 'draws near' (i.e. into the very cloud of God's glory, vv 12-18). The word *nāgaš* ('draw near') here implies closeness for verbal and visual interaction (Gen 43.19; 45.4) or face-to-face negotiation (Num 32.16)" (180-81). For "gradations of holiness," see J. Milgrom, *Studies in Cultic Theology and Terminology* (Leiden: Brill, 1983) 44; N.M. Sarna, *Exodus*, 151.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 154; F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Theology* (JSOTSup 91; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990) 32-33.

¹⁶⁸ P. Enn, *Exodus*, 391.

¹⁶⁹ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 178.

¹⁷⁰ This point is likely the motivation for the narrative's depiction of Moses ascending and descending the mountain "an inordinate number of times," as J. van Seter puts it ("Comparing Scripture with Scripture," 115).

humanity far below.”¹⁷¹ Then once again, in 24.9, though Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders are all in purview with regard to “seeing” God (וַיֵּרְאוּ; v 10), the verb “ascend” is restricted to Moses (וַיַּעֲלֵ; v 9). From this midpoint of the mountain, and after an exceptional scene of communing with the God of Israel,¹⁷² YHWH calls to Moses (v 12): “Ascend (עֲלֶה) to me on the mountain and be there (שָׁם). . . .” Clearly the summit is the place of God’s (however temporal) dwelling, so that ascending “the mountain” (הַהָרָה) is equated with ascending “to me” (אֵלַי)—the God of the mountain. The same point is made also in the reflex of Ex 20.21 by the use of “there” (שָׁם). In response, we read that Moses arose with Joshua his minister (v 13a). While both Moses and Joshua are in view yet the following verb of ascent is the—by now expected—third masculine singular (13b):¹⁷³

וַיַּעֲלֵ מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָרֹאשׁ הַהוּא:
And Moses ascended to the mountain of God.

This seeming incongruity is, typically, “corrected” by the Septuagint in a twofold manner: (1) by deleting the second occurrence of “Moses,” and (2) by changing the third masculine singular form of the verb for ascent into the plural form.¹⁷⁴ To be sure, the narrative has been something of an interpretive puzzle. However, once Moses’ role is seen within the context of a “gate liturgy,” similar to Noah’s role regarding entrance into the ark,¹⁷⁵ then rather than viewing the

¹⁷¹ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 99.

¹⁷² T.E. Fretheim notes: “The special import of this visit is *the special presence of God* that is vouchsafed to these individuals as representatives of the people. . . . This serves to make an important point: *God is committed to a real presence with this people* in all of their journeyings, a deeply personal level of involvement. . . . This anticipates the discussion between Moses and God in chapters 32-34, where the continuing divine presence with Israel is at issue” (*Exodus*, 259-60 emphasis original).

¹⁷³ The seeming incongruity draws attention to Moses’ exclusive role as ascender. A.M. Rodriguez, e.g., comments: “The biblical text seems to suggest that Moses and Joshua went up together (24.13). But according to 24.15-18, Moses alone ‘entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain’” (“Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 132 fn 13).

¹⁷⁴ Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 142.

¹⁷⁵ The gate liturgy also informs the door motif found throughout Scripture, whereby safety is found amidst judgment: for Noah (Gen 7.1), Lot (Gen 19.16), Israel (Exod 12.23), Rahab (Josh 2.19), and for the Christian via the “door” of Christ (Matt 25.10-13; Heb 10.19-20). Though he makes no connection to the gate liturgy, cf. B. Waltke, *Genesis*, 152. Integral also is the Tabernacle drama on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23.26-32).

apparent incongruity as the result merely of the accretion of various strands of tradition, one begins to understand the purposive logic underlying the narrative phenomena. Continuing to v 14, there is, further, an immediate contrast as the elders are commanded to stay (שָׁבוּ). A further summary statement reiterates the portrayal, v 15:

נִיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָהָר וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן אֶת־הָהָר :
And Moses ascended to the mountain and the cloud covered the mountain.

Thus it is clear that “Moses alone could ascend all the way up the mountain, near to Yahweh (vs. 2 [of Ex 24]) where the glory of Yahweh was manifested in a special way.”¹⁷⁶ Tabernacle parallels are suggestive here in as much as entering the Holy of holies, behind the veil, covers the high priest’s meeting with God from the sight of the people, just as the thick darkness of the cloud here covered Moses. That the summit of the mount corresponds to the holy of holies is already somewhat commonplace in scholarship. Rylaarsdam, for example, states: “Moses is asked to come up to God, to enter what in the temple was known as the holy of holies.”¹⁷⁷ YHWH’s theophanic manifestation upon Sinai is even traced by Beyerlin to the concealing cloud of smoke appearing above the mercy seat of the ark (cf. Lev 16.2), which he in turn derives from the “censer full of coals of fire” in the sanctuary.¹⁷⁸ “Conversely,” he writes, and with this we are in agreement, “this cultic ceremony served to realize in a dramatic way the Sinai theophany and its accompanying phenomena.”¹⁷⁹ Thus, once more we find the tabernacle served as a portable Sinai, but more to the point: Sinai served to pre-figure the tabernacle.

¹⁷⁶ A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 132.

¹⁷⁷ J.C. Rylaarsdam, “The Book of Exodus,” *IB* 1:1018. Cf. also G.A.F. Knight, *Theology as Narration: A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 159: “Moses enters into the mystery, just as does the High Priest in later days, when he enters the Holy Place in the Temple.”

¹⁷⁸ W. Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, 134. Cf. J. Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 186-88.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 134-35.

Now if Kline is correct in positing that the glory cloud of God's Presence rested upon Eden's mount,¹⁸⁰ then—beyond the correspondence between Paradise and the tabernacle¹⁸¹—the parallels with Sinai are striking. Niehaus similarly makes the case that the post-lapsarian Presence of God was a storm theophany, יהוה קול *qôl yhwh* in Gen 3.8 translated as YHWH's thunderous Presence and the primal Couple's response being likened to Israel's response to the "thunder" (הקולות *haqqôlôt*) in Exod 20.18.¹⁸² Another correspondence, noted by Currid, is the death sentence imposed for disobeying God's word: "you shall surely die," מות תמות (Gen 2.17)// "he shall surely be put to death," מות יקח (Exod 19.12).¹⁸³ The parallel between Eden and Sinai becomes more evident at the close of Exod 24, vv 16-18:

Now the glory of YHWH dwelled (וַיִּשְׁכֶּן) upon the Mountain of Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The appearance of the glory of YHWH was like a consuming fire (אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת) on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the sons of Israel. So Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and he ascended (וַיַּעֲלֶה) the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Beyond the obvious allusion to the six days of creation, with the seventh as the symbol of Divine-human engagement, Och points out the correspondence between the tree of life and the Torah which is "a tree of life to them that hold fast to her" (Prov 3.18; cf. Deut 30.15-16).¹⁸⁴ Moses ascends the summit of YHWH's Mount, then, precisely to gain life for the sons of Israel. The first use of the root for "dwelled" (שכן), moreover, is Gen 3.24 when the cherubim are "caused-to-dwell" (וַיִּשְׁכְּנוּ) at the gate of Eden, along with "the flame of the whirling sword." YHWH's glory dwelling (וַיִּשְׁכֶּן) atop Sinai's mount, like a "consuming fire...in the eyes of the

¹⁸⁰ M.G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 35-42.

¹⁸¹ Cf., e.g., G. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," pp 19-25 in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), reprinted in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, R.S. Hess, D.T. Tsumura, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994) 399-404.

¹⁸² J. Niehaus, "In the Wind of the Storm: Another Look at Genesis III 8," *VT* 44.2 (1994) 263-67; *idem.*, *God at Sinai* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 155-57. Niehaus's view is accepted by D.K. Stuart (*Exodus*, 429).

¹⁸³ J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 22. Further, each phrase caps its respective sentence.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. B. Och, "Creation and Redemption," 238-39.

sons of Israel,” may serve a similar function—that is, as a warning that the summit may *not* be ascended. The storm and fire imagery presents the coming of YHWH, language recurrent in OT theophany accounts, and finding parallels in Canaanite descriptions of a deity’s arrival.¹⁸⁵ In general we can affirm with Sarna that the “function of the detailed, elaborated, and animated descriptions of the upheavals of nature is to convey in human terms something of the ultimately inexpressible, ineffable impact of the awesome and mysterious manifestation of the Divine Presence.”¹⁸⁶

Returning to שכן, the usages that follow Exod 24.16 are found in Exod 25.8 and 29.45 and have direct reference to the tabernacle:

25.8: Let them make for me a sanctuary so I may dwell (וְשָׁכַנְתִּי) among them.

29.45: I will dwell (וְשָׁכַנְתִּי) among the sons of Israel [in the Tabernacle, cf. v 44], and I will be their God.

As YHWH dwelled amidst Israel upon Sinai, so he will do so through the tabernacle (constructed according to the revealed *tabnit*), the “portable Sinai.”¹⁸⁷ Indeed the sparse narrative itself, the event it describes, may have served as something of a portrayal of worship, vivifying the liturgical realities of tabernacle worship, including the role of the “seventh day.” To be sure, the final instructions regarding the establishment of the cult deal with Sabbath law (31.12-17), concluding with “for in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested (וַיָּשָׁב) and was refreshed.” From this perspective, Exod 24.16-18 is of a piece with the creation narrative as “liturgical narrative.” On the sanctified day, the seventh day set apart for the creature’s encounter with the Creator, YHWH calls out to Moses.¹⁸⁸ Because the description

¹⁸⁵ Cf. J.I. Durham, Exodus, 270; R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972) 107-20; J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995) 17-141.

¹⁸⁶ N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 134.

¹⁸⁷ So labeled by various scholars, e.g., T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 232; *idem.*, *Exodus*, 274.

¹⁸⁸ See S.W. Hahn, “Worship in the Word: Toward a Liturgical Hermeneutic,” *Letter & Spirit* 1 (2005) 109: “Moses’ time on the mountain can be seen as a kind of ‘new creation’—the cloud of divine Presence covers the mountain for six days and on the seventh. God’s instructions consist of a series of seven commands that

of the glory of YHWH as a “consuming fire” follows the seventh day (instead of being appended immediately after mention of the cloud in v 15, after the glorious presence in 16a, or even after the mention of the cloud again in 16b), the impression left is that the seventh day, as set-apart or sacred time, indeed brought with it the special immanence of Israel’s God. “Moses ascends by himself ever higher into the mountain (vv 15, 18 must now mean stages in the ascent).”¹⁸⁹ More to our point, however, is simply that the one in place as First Man in this portrayal, biding quietly alone throughout the six creational days, only to emerge as the Creator calls him out on the seventh as some new Adam, this one is Moses. Thus the seventh ascent finds “Moses alone reaching the top.”¹⁹⁰ Justly then Exod 24 has been described as a going “back to Eden.”¹⁹¹ Sinai continues the creation of Genesis 1,¹⁹² portraying Israel as YHWH’s new creation.¹⁹³ As he had created the cosmos out of chaos through his word, so now YHWH creates social order, in conformity with that cosmic order, via the giving of the Law.¹⁹⁴ To state it within the context of worship, the cult transforms chaos into creation.¹⁹⁵ “Six days pass before the creation of the document that symbolizes the creation of the covenant community. The seventh day, the day of theocratic rest, is the day for communion between YHWH and Moses who draws near.”¹⁹⁶ The seventh day is not only highlighted thematically, as the day when YHWH calls out for his servant

continue for seven chapters and conclude with the ordinances for the seventh day, the sabbath (Exod 31.12-17).”

¹⁸⁹ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 261. Cf. B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 504-05.

¹⁹⁰ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 504-05. Childs points out that if read as whole the repeated ascents offers a coherent picture of a gradual ascent to different levels of the mount. J.D. Currid similarly notes: “The verb to ‘go up’ is used seven times in this chapter...and the seventh time the word appears is when Moses reaches the summit of Sinai, goes into the cloud and remains there for forty days (24.18)” (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 134).

¹⁹¹ By J.W. Hilber (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185).

¹⁹² T.E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation,” 357.

¹⁹³ J.J. Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 198-99.

¹⁹⁴ T.E. Fretheim, “The Reclamation of Creation,” 362. Similarly, R.L. Cohn writes: “Indeed, the giving of the law at Sinai is analogous to the act of bringing order out chaos in creation myths” (*The Shape of Sacred Space*, 56).

¹⁹⁵ Cf. J.D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (San Francisco: Harper, 1988) 127.

¹⁹⁶ J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185. Cf. B.F. Batto, *Slaying the Dragon*, 120.

to ascend, but also by the literary structure itself which centers upon the seventh day (24.15-18a):¹⁹⁷

- A And Moses ascended into the mountain
- B and a cloud covered the mountain
- C And the glory of YHWH tabernacled upon Mount Sinai
- D and the cloud covered it six days
- E and he called to Moses on the seventh day
- D' out of the midst of the cloud
- C' And the sight of the glory of YHWH was like devouring fire on the top of the mount
- B' And Moses went into the midst of the cloud
- A' And he ascended into the mountain

“The majestic description of an event lasting six days and reaching the height of its grandeur on the seventh,” writes Avishur, “is known to us from Akkadian, Ugaritic, and biblical literature,”¹⁹⁸ namely, in creation/temple texts. Moses is portrayed not only as the one consistently able to ascend the mount of YHWH, but also able to be “planted” there, able to “abide” there, for “Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights” (v 18).¹⁹⁹ Indeed, after reading through the Sinai narrative, and upon hearing the question of Pss 15 and 24 (“Who may ascend the mount of YHWH?”), how else but “Moses” could one answer? Significantly, Hauge also notes the centrality of the “who may ascend” motif, with Moses alone being qualified:

The theme of ascent is also reflected by the peculiar element in 19.13b centered around motifs of a special ascent to the mountain...Both theme of ascent and the formal ambiguities are continued in the story of implementation in 24.11-18...At the very least, these formal peculiarities attest the interest in a theme ‘who may ascend the mountain.’ This is expressed by 19.13, vv 20-25 added to by 20.18-21, 24.1-2 followed by vv 10-1 and the new invitation to Moses in v 12 followed by vv 13-18. The theme of ascent and the corresponding prohibition against the usurped “nearness” related to certain actors is repeated like some narrative refrain. Also, the uncertainties and ambiguities with regard to the “who” of those ascending are repeated rather consistently throughout this composition...At the very least, the repetitions underline the negative aspects of the unworthy ascent...In Exodus 19.1-24.2, with its aftermath in 24.3-8, seems to represent one set of interlinked events, centered around the theophanic episode introduced in 19.16 and dedicated to a theme of “who may ascend”... Repeated in all mountain scenes with Moses as subject, *‘ala* is

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Y. Avishur, “Revelation at Sinai,” 192-93. Avishur notes the alternation of emphasis on “mount” and “cloud”: mount-cloud-mount-cloud-mount-cloud-mount (195). Further, and as will be discussed below, the seventh day is highlighted structurally in the next narrative unit, framing the Golden Calf idolatry in 31.12-17 and 35.1-3.

¹⁹⁸ Y. Avishur, “Revelation at Sinai,” 195.

¹⁹⁹ M. Barker suggests that passing through the veil into the Holy of holies was passing beyond time into eternity (see her “Beyond the Veil of the Temple”). Given the correspondence between the Tabernacle/Temple Holy of holies and the summit of the Cosmic Mountain, the same idea may be involved here with Moses’ supernatural stay of forty days and nights. The Presence of YHWH being accessed at the summit, the supernatural subsistence of Moses is likely linked to the infinite being and abundant life of YHWH (cf. Exod 3.2, 14). J. Currid (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 144) notes that the number forty is often used of a period of trial and test (Exod 16.35), purification (Gen 50.3), or simply a generic extended period of time (Num 13.25).

the central term for the human movement. In Exod 19.13, together with vv 21-24, the basic imagery of theophany and “ascent” is also retained for the other participants, connected with the prohibition against any usurped ascent (cf. also 34.3). The significance of “ascend” for the composition as a whole is reflected by the reapplication of this term with the people as subjects in chs. 32-34.²⁰⁰

“Moses’ unique status...is manifest in the fact that he apparently is the only one allowed to approach the top of the mountain, the area closest to the presence of God.”²⁰¹ The one able to ascend is “Moses alone” (בְּיָחִיד, 24.2),²⁰² as has been the pattern since the first encounter in Exod 3.²⁰³ One could multiply the examples of Moses as “the one able to ascend,” but we will restrict the pursuit to one more, the opening of chapter 34. YHWH tells Moses to “ascend (אֲשַׁלֵּךְ) in the morning to Mount Sinai, and stand before Me there (שָׁם) on the top (רֶאשִׁית) of the mountain” (v 2). The collocation of terms (“ascend,” “mountain,” “there,” and “top/head”) positions the text with the others already considered, and it also shares in like features:

- (1) God calls/commands Moses alone to ascend;
- (2) a prohibition immediately follows that others not presume to do the same (v 3: “And no man shall ascend (לֹא-יֵאָשַׁע) with you...”);
- (3) Moses’ actual ascent narrated (v 4: “Then Moses arose early in the morning and ascended (וַיַּעֲלֶה) Mount Sinai just as YHWH had commanded him...);
- (4) a description of YHWH’S presence atop the mount in the cloud (v 5: “Now YHWH descended in the cloud and stood with him there...”).

In relation to the tabernacle, then, there is a sense where Aaron’s role (who, incidentally, was not allowed to enter the top of the mount) was to portray in the drama²⁰⁴ of liturgy the role of Moses in relation to the cosmic mountain (and thus of Adam to Eden’s mount)—that is, via entering the

²⁰⁰ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 47-49, 110. Hauge, in emphasizing the divine descent of the Glory cloud upon the Tabernacle at the end of Exod 40, believes the “who” question is changed to the question of “how” once the (sinful) people are cast as the “who” (320). This, however, fails to appreciate the true correspondence between the cosmic mountain summit and the tabernacle holy of holies—for even under the Tabernacle cultus, the “people” are not able to enter.

²⁰¹ C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 156.

²⁰² B.S. Childs notes that Moses’ special role adumbrated in ch. 19, made explicit in 20.18ff, is climaxed in 24.3ff as he seals the covenant (*Exodus*, 503).

²⁰³ D.K. Stuart, *Exodus*, 552.

²⁰⁴ This term “drama” is not used here loosely: “Drama and ritual were inseparable in the ancient world. The first plays were religious events. Ritual, and specifically sacrifice, can be understood as a drama intended to have some effect on the universe, but also on the participants and their society. Under the terms of this conceptual model, we may speak of the acts that make up a ceremony as its ‘ritual plot’” (R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priesthood*, 71).

tabernacle holy of holies, the high priest as mediator²⁰⁵ represents the one “able to ascend” the summit of the cosmic mountain.²⁰⁶ To be sure, “ascending the mountain and entering the holy of holies amount to the same thing.”²⁰⁷ Given our consideration of “door” (פֶּתַח) and its relation to the gate liturgy in previous chapters, it is significant that the ordination of Aaron and his sons as presented in Lev 8-9 indeed focuses particularly on the door of the tent of meeting.²⁰⁸ The tabernacle veil, the פֶּרֶכֶת, “functions as an objective and material witness to the conceptual boundary drawn between the area behind it and all other areas.”²⁰⁹ Polak, who explains the apparent contradiction of Exod 19.13 as a ritual pertaining to the חֹרֶם *ḥarām* itself, suggestively states: “The connection to holy ritual is also indicated by the hymn concerning the ascent to the Temple Mount: ‘Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place?’ (Ps 24.3, מִי־יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר־יְהוָה וּמִי־יָקֻם בְּמִקְוֹם קֹדֶשׁ).”²¹⁰

CONCLUSION

In the creation narrative, we saw that Adam, after his lapse, was barred by cherubim and flaming sword from ascending the glory-filled summit of Eden. In the deluge narrative, we noted how repeatedly Noah alone was able to enter the Ark, both his family and all the creatures entering

²⁰⁵ Cf. C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7.13 as a Test Case,” pp 161-93 in *SBL 1997 Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 36; Atlanta: SBL, 1998). He also notes that, in extra-biblical literature, Enoch’s heavenly ascent “looks most like the high priest’s annual visit to the holy of holies on the Day of Atonement” (180).

²⁰⁶ In this connection, C. Meyer’s observation is pertinent: “The central role of Moses in this enterprise [the erection and installation of the Tabernacle in ch. 40] means that on this occasion he washes in the laver (v 31), puts loaves on the offering table (v 23), arranges the lamps (v 25), offers incense (v 27), and makes sacrifices (v 29) –all acts otherwise relegated to Aaron and his sons. The consecration of the priests, which will allow them to perform these rites, is not included in Exodus (it comes in Leviticus 8). At this point only Moses is qualified, and he initiates the priestly service” (*Exodus*, 282-83).

²⁰⁷ N. Wyatt, “Degrees of Divinity: Some Mythical and Ritual Aspects of West Semitic Kingship,” pp 191-220 in *“There’s Such Divinity doth Hedge a King”: Selected Essays of Nicolas Wyatt on Royal Ideology in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature* (SOTS; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) 198, first published in *UF* 31 (1999) 853-87.

²⁰⁸ F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 49.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 33. While Gorman here refers specifically to the כַּפֶּרֶת within the Inner Sanctum, it is the veil that marks the separation.

²¹⁰ F. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 128-29. The cultic interpretation is also suggested by Ps 47.6 and Josh 6.5 (129 fn 38).

“to/with-him.” In the Sinai narrative, it has become evident that Moses alone is able to ascend the mount, the people warned off even from touching the base, while the priests and elders qualified for the mid-section only via Moses. Polak is thus correct in singling out the privileged status of Moses who “as a messenger and mediator is not dependent on the performance of elaborate rituals enabling him to undertake a shaman-like journey to the divine abode. On the contrary, he is called upon to ascend to God, and by virtue of the divine invitation he is able to stay on the mountain in superhuman circumstances.”²¹¹ Given its emphasis, the role of Moses communing with God on the mountain must be both important and vital to the meaning of Exod 19-40 as a whole.²¹² This privilege of ascent Polak, again, rightly attributes to Moses’ role as *mediator*: Moses’ ascent is precisely the “ascent of the mediator, who positions himself between the human world and the realm of the divine....”²¹³ This “unique role of Moses who alone can approach God himself,”²¹⁴ further, may serve as a principle, thus manifesting parallels among, for example, Adam, Noah, Moses, the Levitical high priest, and, in the New Testament, the Christ.

²¹¹ F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 118.

²¹² M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 24.

²¹³ F. Polak, “Theophany and Mediator,” 131. Further, “Moses’ frequent ascent and descent, far from leading to an absurd, is related to his function of mediator and ‘go-between’” (130 fn 49). The radiance of *kabod* illuminating his face upon the descent from the mountain is another reminder of Moses’ privileged role and access (Ex 34.29-35). “Moses’ role as mediator,” further, includes “both the legal and the mythical aspects of the covenant idea” (F. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 134). While Moses is indeed “set aside” for this role as Mediator, the narrative nonetheless portrays him, by likeness to Noah and by association with the Law, etc., as righteous –the qualifying prerequisite for ascent. Jewish legend even accounted each parent of Moses, Amram and Jochabed, righteous (Cf. A. Kensky, “Moses and Jesus: The Birth of the Savior,” *Judaism* 42 (1993) 43-49 (44-5).

²¹⁴ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 502. It would of course be incorrect to interpret the creational aspects of the Sinai narrative as applying exclusively to Moses as mediator. Fretheim rightly points out: “As a newly redeemed community by and under God, Israel is in effect addressed as humanity was on the sixth day of creation. In the gift of the law, Israel is thereby given specific tasks in the tradition of Genesis 1.26-28. Israel now stands before God and hears anew the command of God to have dominion over the earth, to till and keep the land, and to be its brother’s keeper (the narratives subsequent to Gen 3 are also revealing of creational commands). Israel, by attending to its relationship with Yahweh and to the commands given at Sinai, grows toward God’s intention for the human, indeed the entire world, laid out in the creation...Sinai reiterates for those redeemed the demands of creation” (“Reclamation of Creation,” 362, 363). H.H. Schmid noted that even “Legal order belongs to the order of creation” (“Creation, Righteousness and Salvation: ‘Creation Theology’ as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology” pp 102-17 in *Creation in the Old Testament*, B.W. Anderson, ed. [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978] 104-05).

C. *The Altar and the Divine Presence*

Finally, the significance of the altar within the Torah, and specifically within texts dealing with cosmic mountain ideology, has been noted in previous chapters and is worth underscoring here.²¹⁵ After the summary statement of Exod 20.21 that rounds off the Sinai pericope begun in ch. 19, and whereby we read that “Moses drew near the dense darkness where God was,” YHWH immediately commands the building of an earthen altar (20.22-26).²¹⁶ Similarly, Exod 24.4 states:

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל-דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה וַיַּשְׁכֵּם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיֵּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת הָהָר וְשִׁתִּים עֲשָׂרָה מִצְבָּה לְשָׁנִים עָשָׂר שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

[Moses] arose early in the morning, and he built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.

1. ALTAR AS MOUNTAIN OF GOD

Albright's suggestion that the altar may have been viewed as a model of the cosmic mountain, with *הָרָאֵל* *har'el* of Ezek 43.15 meaning “mountain of God,”²¹⁷ is intriguing in as much as others have noted altars have the appearance of miniature mountains.²¹⁸ Ezekiel's altar (vv 13-17) is described as having three levels, ziggurat-like: the first called *הֶאֱרֶשׁ חֵיק* *hêq hā'āreš* “the bosom

²¹⁵ As with the Deluge narrative, the altar (as well as the mountain) in the Sinai narrative is related to the concept of covenant. Cf. T.D. Alexander, “The Composition of the Sinai Narrative,” 6.

²¹⁶ For the literary integrity of the text, see J.H. Tigay, “The Presence of God and the Coherence of Exodus 20.22-26,” pp 195-211 in *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume*, Ch. Cohen, Sh.M. Paul, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

²¹⁷ W.F. Albright, “The Babylonian Temple-Tower and the Altar of Burnt Offering,” *JBL* 39.3/4 (1920) 137-42.

²¹⁸ P. Haupt, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, trans. C.H. Toy (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1899) 187: “The Temple resembled, to a certain extent, a Babylonian temple-tower of three stories, and the altar of burnt-offering is practically a Babylonian temple-tower on a smaller scale, or rather, the temple-tower is, as it were, a huge altar.” D. Parry, “Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God.” Parry further notes that the altar constructed by Moses was either of unhewn stones or the earth itself (cf. Exod 20.24-25) adding to the mountain appearance. M. Barker notes: “What the great altar represented is not known; it must, however, be significant that it was called the mountain of God, that there was a great pit underneath and that it was regularly covered with blood, i.e. life” (*The Gate of Heaven*, 32). This remark by Barker is all the more striking as it conveys the parallel not merely between the mount and the altar, but between the *cosmology* of the cosmic mount and the altar—with the pit of *Sheol* to-boot. S. Gitin points out that the earliest four-horned altars are the Late Bronze Age terracotta-tower models from Emar, Mumbaqat, and Tell Faq'ous in the Syrian Middle Euphrates region, generally dated to the 14th-12th centuries B.C. (“The Four-Horned Altar and Sacred Space: An Archaeological Perspective,” pp 95-123 in *Sacred Time, Sacred Space, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, B. Gittlen, ed. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2002] 96).

of the earth” and the top, again, “mountain of God.”²¹⁹ The argument for the altar’s signifying the holy mount would appear bolstered by Exod 24.4’s description of two building projects. There is, first, no ambiguity that the twelve pillars are built “for” or “according to” (לְ) the twelve tribes of Israel. Secondly, the text itself indeed bears out that whereas the pillars are mentioned in relation to the tribes, so the altar is mentioned *in relation to* the mountain, built at its foot: altar//mountain, twelve pillars//twelve tribes.²²⁰ A third line of argument may be posed by considering the overall portrayal of the scene as a small-scale model of worship, something of a “play within a play.” Twelve pillars about an altar, the pillars representing the twelve tribes, already by implication seems to imply the altar represents the mountain about which the twelve tribes have gathered—Mount Sinai, dominating the literary and geographic space of the Sinai complex, alone qualifies. Note also the similar prohibition against ascending the altar (20.26):

וְלֹא-תַעֲלֶה בַּמַּעֲלֹת עַל-מִזְבְּחִי
And you shall not ascend by steps upon my altar...

While on the surface, the restriction may appear to be based upon *mere* modesty (“so as not to expose your nakedness”), yet it relates to holiness in the same manner that sexual relations are prohibited before approaching Sinai, in other words, the worship of YHWH is not to be equated with the ANE cults where exposure and sexual license were common place.²²¹ But further, there may be an intentional lexical and thematic link to the Fall narrative where, upon the exposure of

²¹⁹ Cf. W.F. Albright, “The Babylonian Temple-Tower,” 138-41; M. Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (1991; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2008) 30-31.

²²⁰ It is not, perhaps, insignificant that the word chosen to establish the relation of the altar to the mountain, תַּחַת *taḥat*, is also the stock word for substitution: “in place of,” “instead of,” “in exchange for,” “as if it was, like” (*BDB*, 1065). Indeed, it is because someone/thing stands under/at the place of another, that substitution can be made, such as when the high priest is anointed to “take the place of” his father: לָקַחַן תַּחַת אָבִיו (Lev 16.32). Though such a reading here, to be sure, is unlikely, it would nonetheless not be unnatural to translate: “and he built an altar in place of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.” Syntactic considerations alone, Exod 24.4 is not very different from 21.23: וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת הָהָר // וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת נֹפֶשׁ (cf. also Exod 21.24, 25, 26, 27, 36, 37).

²²¹ Most commentators point out the distinction from Canaanite practices. Cf., e.g., J.K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, 195; J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 61-62.

their nakedness (עֶרְוָה Gen 3.7; Exod 20.26), Adam and Eve are driven out of the garden summit, no longer able to ascend. Also of relevance, that the phrase in v 26, “to uncover (גָּלָה *galā*) nakedness (עֶרְוָה *’erwā*),” constitutes fall language is seen by its usage to describe the fall of Babylon (Isa 47.3) as well as the exile of Israel (Jer 43.3; Ezek 39.28; 2 Kgs 25.11).²²² Scholars have acknowledged, further, that the investiture of the priests utilizes the same verb form (hiphil of לָבַשׁ *lābaš*) and clothing term, “tunics” (כְּתֹנֶת *k’tōnet*), as when God clothes Adam and his wife (Gen 3.21// Exod 28.41, 29.8, 40.14; Lev 8.13).²²³

2. THEOPHANIC PRESENCE ATOP THE ALTAR

The suggestion that the altar represents Sinai is further buttressed by comparing the fire of the altar (cf. “burnt offerings” in v 5) with the statement “like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain” in v 17, referring to “the sacramental presence of God as fire.”²²⁴ Avishur’s chiastic outline of the pericope exposes YHWH’s fiery Presence upon the Mount as the central point of the unit and pivot of the entire account:²²⁵

- A 1 And Moses went up unto the Lord
- 2 And the Lord called to him out of the mountain saying
- 3 Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel
- 4 Ye have seen... (19.3-4)
- 5 And Moses came and called to the elders of the people
- 6 And laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him
- 7 And all the people answered together and said
- 8 All that the Lord hath spoken will we do (19.7-8)
- B And the Lord said to Moses, Go unto the people
- C And sanctify them today and tomorrow (19.10)
- D And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying
- E Take care not to go on the mountain (19.12)
- F And Moses went down from the mountain to the people (19.14)
- G And there were sounds...and the sound of the trumpet waxed very loud
- H And all the people that were in the camp trembled (19.16)
- I And mount Sinai was altogether in smoke

²²² T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 515. The exile, being from the Presence of God in the Promise Land, parallels the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden.

²²³ See, e.g., G. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden,” pp 19-25 in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Division A: The Period of the Bible* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986) 21-22; republished in *I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, R.S. Hess and D.T. Tsumura, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994).

²²⁴ T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 102.

²²⁵ Y. Avishur, “Revelation at Sinai,” 174-76. Avishur further points out in the A-A’ parallel how עָלָה “he went up” is synonymous with נָגַשׁ “he drew near” (177), an important comparison to understand later “drawing near” language as an “ascent” of worship.

J On which the Lord descended in fire (20.18)
 I' And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln
 H' And all the mountain trembled very much (19.18)
 G' And the voice of the trumpet sounded long and waxed even louder (19.19)
 F' And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mount (19.20)
 E' The people cannot go up to mount Sinai
 D' For thou chargedst us saying, Set bounds around the mount
 C' And sanctify it (19.23)
 B' And the Lord said to Moses, Away, get thee down...and Moses went down unto the people (19.24-25)
A' 1 And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was (20.21)
 2 And the Lord said unto Moses
 3 Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel
 4 Ye have seen (20.22)
 5 And Moses came and told the people
 6 All the words of the Lord
 7 And all the people answered with one voice and said
 8 All the words which the Lord hath said will we do (24.3)

Mount Sinai, within the complex of Exod 19-24, functions as a symbol for the Presence of God.²²⁶ Broadly and literarily, as already noted, Polak has shown that in the Exodus narrative, the Nile represents Egypt placed vis-à-vis the divine mountain, Sinai, which symbolizes YHWH.²²⁷ That Presence, more particularly, manifests itself via the fiery theophany atop the mount, in the “holy of holies,” as it were, and finds correspondence with the fire atop the earthen altar, and even—by metonymy—with the altar itself. Consequently, one might state that the “altar upon which the sacrifice was burned represented YHWH,”²²⁸ whose “unseen presence is interpreted as a fiery essence.”²²⁹ “Clearly,” writes Tigay, “the altar represents God.”²³⁰ Both the altar and Sinai, then, symbolized the Presence of YHWH. The general ANE understanding of a deity’s “consuming” of a sacrifice by flames upon the altar is also relevant.²³¹ Van Seters,

²²⁶ T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 15: The mountain is a “signifier of divine cultic presence.”

²²⁷ F. Polak, *Water, Rock, and Wood*, 39.

²²⁸ J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 181. J.I. Durham similarly states “...the altar representing the Presence of Yahweh” (*Exodus*, 343). Bruckner, Cassuto, Currid, Driver, Noth, and Sarna interpret the same at 24.6 in their commentaries, as does J.L. McKenzie (*A Theology of the Old Testament*, 45). Cf. O. Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World* (1978; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 145.

²²⁹ J.K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, 98.

²³⁰ J.H. Tigay, “The Presence of God and the Coherence of Exodus 20.22-26,” 205. Interestingly, J. Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), in a recent work takes for granted that this altar was the “symbol of God” (*Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 2011] 132).

²³¹ For variant understandings of such expressions particularly in Israelite religion, cf. R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Religious Institutions* (1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 449-50; R.J. Daly, *The Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 21-22; W.H. Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament: A History*, J. Sturdy, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1983) 129; C.R. North, “Sacrifice,” in *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, A. Richardson, ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1950) 206. J.W. Hilber notes: “The

from a source-critical perspective, notes how Deuteronomy lays great emphasis upon God speaking to the people “from the midst of the fire,” and how P develops the cloud and fire symbols of the Yahwist by identifying them with the “glory” (כְּבוֹד *kabôd*) of YHWH—both features being congruent with a symbolic identifying of God with fire.²³² Indeed, Deut 5.4 emphasizes that YHWH’s speaking from the midst of the fire was “face to face” (fronted before the verb):

פָּנִים בְּפָנִים דִּבֶּר יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם בְּהָר קָדְשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֵשׁ

Face to face YHWH spoke with you on the Mountain from the midst of the fire.

Exod 24.17, the primary description of the כְּבוֹד יְהוָה *kʿbôd yhwh*, thus reads:²³³

כְּבוֹד יְהוָה כָּאֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת

the glory of YHWH was like a consuming fire

The burning bush (Exod 3), represented later by the menorah, may also reflect the tradition of God’s speaking from the fire, of the divine Presence being symbolized by fire.²³⁴ The theophanic fire in Exod 3 thus offers a proleptic view of Exod 19-24, when the sons of Israel are brought back to “this mountain” (3.12):²³⁵

The messenger of YHWH appeared to him in a flame of fire (אֵשׁ) from the midst of the bush (הַסִּקְיָהּ). So he looked—and look!—the bush (הַסִּקְיָהּ) was burning with fire (אֵשׁ), but the bush (הַסִּקְיָהּ) was not consumed (אָכַל). Then Moses said, “Let me turn aside now and see this great sight—why is the bush (הַסִּקְיָהּ) not burned up?”...The he [YHWH] said, “Do not draw near this place. Take you sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing upon—it is sacred ground” (3.2-5).

burning of the animal symbolized the deity consuming it as a meal (Lev 3.11). Thus the Lord would be considered present at the table” (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 181 fn 19).

²³² J. van Seters, “Comparing Scripture with Scripture,” 118-19. Cf. Y. Avishur, “Revelation at Sinai,” 184.

²³³ F.M. Cross Jr. (*Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 166-67) notes that “fire” constitutes stock language in descriptions of theophany. For God’s manifestation as fire, cf. J.K. Kruntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967) 96-100; S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978) 109-12, 149-51; B.P. Robinson, “Moses at the Burning Bush,” *JSOT* 75 (1997) 107-22; I. Wilson, *Out of the Midst of the Fire: Divine Presence in Deuteronomy* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); as well as Gen 15.17; Exod 3.2; 19.18; Deut 4.24; 5.24; 9.3.

²³⁴ J. van Seters, “Comparing Scripture with Scripture,” 129 fn 15. Cf. B.W. Anderson (with S. Bishop), *Contours of Old Testament Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 139; R.L. Cohn, *The Shape of Sacred Space*, 48; N. Wyatt, “The Significance of the Burning Bush,” pp 13-17 in *Mythic Mind*; originally published in *VT* 36 (1986) 361-65. J. Tigay adds the torch and smoking oven in the Covenant between the Pieces of Gen 15.17 (“The Presence of God,” 205-06).

²³⁵ This is noted in the general commentaries, e.g., N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 132; P. Enns, *Exodus*, 385, 392, 493.

Throughout Exod 19 the people are warned repeatedly not to draw near the mountain, “Sinai” (סִינַי *sînay*) likely constituting a word-play with “bush” (הַסִּנֵּה *hass^eneh*),²³⁶ although in contrast to Exod 3 where the bush is not consumed (וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינֶנּוּ אֹכֵל) by the fire, the appearing of YHWH atop Sinai is as “a consuming fire” (אֵשׁ אֹכֵלֶת *ēš ’ōkelet* 24.17).²³⁷ Then, between סִנֵּה and סִינַי, there is the pillar of cloud/fire.²³⁸ That the Glory of YHWH is a divine fire may even be considered a fundamental aspect of the narrative’s theology,²³⁹ whereby theophany becomes the “experience of the impermanent presence of God as fire on the mountain.”²⁴⁰ Exceptional here also is Exod 19.18, in its paralleling of YHWH’s descent (יָרַד) upon the mountain as/in fire with the smoke ascending (יָאֵל) from the mount like the smoke of a great furnace. Stuart argues here for the *beth* in שָׁאֵל being a *beth essentiae*, translated “as,” so that YHWH did not descend “in fire” but rather “in the form of [or *as*] fire.”²⁴¹ Furthermore, returning to Exod 19.22-26 and the so-called “law of the altar,” the making of the altar is evidently presented in contradistinction to the making of idols:

You shall not make (תַּעֲשֶׂוּ) any gods of silver with me nor gods of gold shall you make (תַּעֲשֶׂוּ) for yourselves. An altar of earth you shall make (תַּעֲשֶׂה) for me...And if you make (תַּעֲשֶׂה) me an altar of stone....

Thus the word עֲשֶׂה is used four times, twice to prohibit the making of idols and twice to prescribe the making of altars, so that the “altar, then, rather than idols, is the locus and symbol

²³⁶ See J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 20-1. Levenson remarks on Moses’ wonder at the outward manifestation of the divine Presence as the bush “burns and burns, but is never burnt up.”

²³⁷ Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 21-22. Cf. standard commentaries for the widely recognized play between “bush” and “Sinai.”

²³⁸ See T.W. Mann, “The Pillar of Cloud in the Reed Sea Narrative.” M. Noth links the pillar cloud to the theophany of Sinai in Exod 19 as directly being derived by it (*Exodus*, 109). P. Enns also connects the burning bush, pillars of cloud and fire, and Mount Sinai, as theophanies of increasing intensity until unbearable at the Sinai climax (*Exodus*, 270).

²³⁹ See T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 766.

²⁴⁰ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 22-23.

²⁴¹ D.K. Stuart, *Exodus*, 430 and fn 298.

of God's presence.²⁴² This understanding is precisely at issue, then, in the Golden Calf narrative where God's Presence (פָּנִים) is mentioned some thirty times.²⁴³ Further, the structure of vv 24-26 consists of two parts to the altar law (v 24a and vv 25-26), the first stated positively and the second negatively, that serve to frame a theology of divine cultic presence (v 24b), and in which to anchor the earthen altar law.²⁴⁴ That the altar symbolized the Presence of Israel's God is evident throughout the Hebrew canon, especially via the use parallelism, such as in Ps 43.4:²⁴⁵

I will go to the altar of God
 אֶל-מִזְבֵּחַ אֱלֹהִים
 to God my exceeding great joy
 אֶל-אֵל שְׂמֵחָה גִּילִי

Although the relationship between the altar and YHWH represents, to be sure, "material aniconism," a nonanthropomorphic, nontheriomorphic object similar to the ark in the sanctuary,²⁴⁶ the symbolism yet remains significant. In a narrative pervaded by the theme of the Presence of God, developing the drama of its danger, Exod 24.17 forms a key statement: "Now the כְּבוֹד (glory/Presence) of YHWH appeared as a devouring fire in the eyes of the sons of

²⁴² Cf. J.H. Tigay, "The Presence of God," 204-05. Tigay rightly relates this contrast to the instructions for the Tabernacle (Exod 25-31) and the Golden Calf episode (32-34) (211). Although he does not mention the Presence theme, Fretheim does link the idols and altar sections via "loyalty to God" (*Exodus*, 242-44), as does Childs (*Exodus*, 465-66) from a redactional perspective. C. Meyers rightly notes: "God's presence will not be in images but rather in the altars made 'for me,' probably an elliptical phrase indicating altars made for sacrificing to God, an act that brings people into God's presence" (189). C. Dohmen points out how, by placing chs. 32-34 in between the tabernacle instructions (chs. 25-31) and construction (35-40), the author is placing before the reader the problem of divine Presence (*Exodus 19-40*, 282).

²⁴³ Cf. A.C. Leder, "Reading Exodus to Learn," 31; C. Dohmen, *Exodus 19-40*, 282 also notes the literary context, the golden calf story placed at the center (32-34) of the tabernacle narrative (Exod 25-31/ 35-40), so that the problem of divine Presence is brought to the fore. He also suggests the "horns" of Moses, as he brings down the signs of the covenant of life, are meant to contrast ironically with the worship of the lifeless golden calf (374).

²⁴⁴ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 511-12.

²⁴⁵ While not mentioning the parallelism of Ps 43.4 itself, J. Tigay states: "In Psalms 42-43, the psalmist's longing to 'come to appear before God' (42.3) culminates in the hope that he 'may come to the altar of God...' (43.4)" ("The Presence of God," 206). Tigay lists several more passages demonstrating the same conceptual identification of the altar with God's Presence (206-07).

²⁴⁶ J.H. Tigay, "The Presence of God," 208.

Israel.”²⁴⁷ Indeed, the fear and trembling that seize the people seems to be precisely because they fear YHWH, the devouring fire, may devour them.²⁴⁸ Bringing together the various lines of consideration, in Leviticus 8-10 this “fiery majesty of God”²⁴⁹ in theophany is transferred from the mountain to the altar:²⁵⁰

Lev 9.23 מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֵל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד נִצְּאוּ וַיִּבְרְכוּ אֶת־הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם:
Moses and Aaron entered into the Tent of Meeting, and went out and blessed the people,
and the Glory of YHWH appeared to all the people,

Lev 9.24 וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת־הַעֹלָה וְאֶת־הַקִּלְבִּים וַיֵּרָא כָּל־הָעָם וַיִּשָּׁאוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם:
and a fire went out from the Presence of YHWH and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat. And when all the people saw, they shouted and fell down upon their faces.

Lev 10. 2 וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:
and a fire went out from the Presence of YHWH and consumed them and they died before the Presence of YHWH.

Indeed, “YHWH your God,” declares Moses in Deut 4.24, “is a devouring fire” (אֵשׁ אֹכֶלֶת).

Therefore in the covenant ritual we are likely to see the twelve pillars as representing “the twelve tribes of Israel as the second party to the covenant, alongside the altar representing YHWH (cf. 1 Kgs 18.31).”²⁵¹ That the altar and twelve pillars parallel the cosmic mountain Presence of YHWH amidst the twelve tribes of Israel is bolstered by another line of reasoning, the blood ritual performed by Moses in vv 6-8:

And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ...And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which YHWH has made with you according to all these words.”

There is general agreement that this blood rite, finding broad parallels in ANE and classical texts, entails the creation of a *communio sacramentalis* between the two parties of the covenant,

²⁴⁷ See J. Lindblom, “Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion,” *HUCA* 32 (1961) 100 and fn 16: “Yahweh’s כְּבוֹד in the form of a devouring fire settled on the mountain,” the כְּבוֹד is here “Yahweh in the form of His fiery radiance.”

²⁴⁸ Cf. J.D. Currid, *Exodus*, vol. 2, 143.

²⁴⁹ M. Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus* (New York: Behrman House, 1969) 16.

²⁵⁰ Cf. T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 564. Dozeman further notes the correspondence of the names “Nadab and Abihu” between mountain (Ex 24.1) and altar (Lev 10.1).

²⁵¹ J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 181.

YHWH and Israel,²⁵² both partners being sprinkled with blood so that the altar, again, represents YHWH.²⁵³ The renewed communion may also be linked with blood's "protective" (i.e., atoning) power, a theme that within the bounds of the book of Exodus begins with the enigmatic attack upon Moses in Exod 4.24-26 and continues with the blood-smeared door posts of the final plague of the first-born sons.²⁵⁴

3. SACRIFICIAL ASCENT

Finally, the literary structure, to be considered briefly below, also emphasizes how the ritual at the base of the mountain finds its consummation at the theophany upon the mountain,²⁵⁵ the ritual itself being a fulfillment of commands from the summit (19.13b).²⁵⁶ The sacrifices, particularly, are highlighted significantly by the structure of the narrative:²⁵⁷

²⁵² See, e.g., W.R. Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1885) 48ff, 281; *idem.*, *The Religion of the Semites* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1889) 294-306; J. Pedersen, *Der Eid bei den Semiten in seinem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen sowie die Stellung des Eides im Islam* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients 3; Strassburg: Trübner, 1914) 21-22, 25; A. van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London: Routledge, 1960) 31-32; H.C. Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (1885; Philadelphia: Wattles and Co., 1898); J. Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentumes* (Berlin: Druck und Verlag von Georg Reimer, 1887) 120. F. Polak confirms the notion according to the ancient custom of "blood brotherhood" embodied in one of the terms for an ally participant in a covenant ritual: *ul ša damīya attā* ("aren't you of my blood /my ally of blood?") ("The Covenant at Mount Sinai," 130-31 [and bibliography on fn 44]).

²⁵³ S.R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911) 253; M. Noth, *Exodus*, 198; E.W. Nicholson, "The Covenant Ritual in Exodus XXIV 3-8," VT 32.1 (1982) 76. J.I. Durham states: "one half of it [the blood] he dashed upon the altar, the symbol of Yahweh's Presence; the other half, he dashed upon the people" (*Exodus*, 343). While L. Perlitt hypothesizes that at an earlier stage in the tradition the blood would have been sprinkled on the pillars representing Israel (*Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* [WMANT 36; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969] 201), Noth, who definitively states the "altar here represents the divine partner in the covenant," seems to suggest the pillars no longer have a role to play in the ceremony once the intervening covenant oath in v 7 takes place (198). Hilber ("Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 182) writes that "half the blood was dashed upon the altar (i.e. YHWH)," noting that in "both Exodus 24 and the Levitical rituals blood is applied to both the altar and to the worshiper, symbolizing renewed communion." In the Christian canon, the Cross of Christ becomes the ultimate expression of God-altar metonymy.

²⁵⁴ F. Polak makes a similar connection between Exod 4 and the plague of the first-born ("Theophany and Mediator," 125 and fns 35, 36).

²⁵⁵ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 180. For the relationship between the events at the base and at the summit, see B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 140-41.

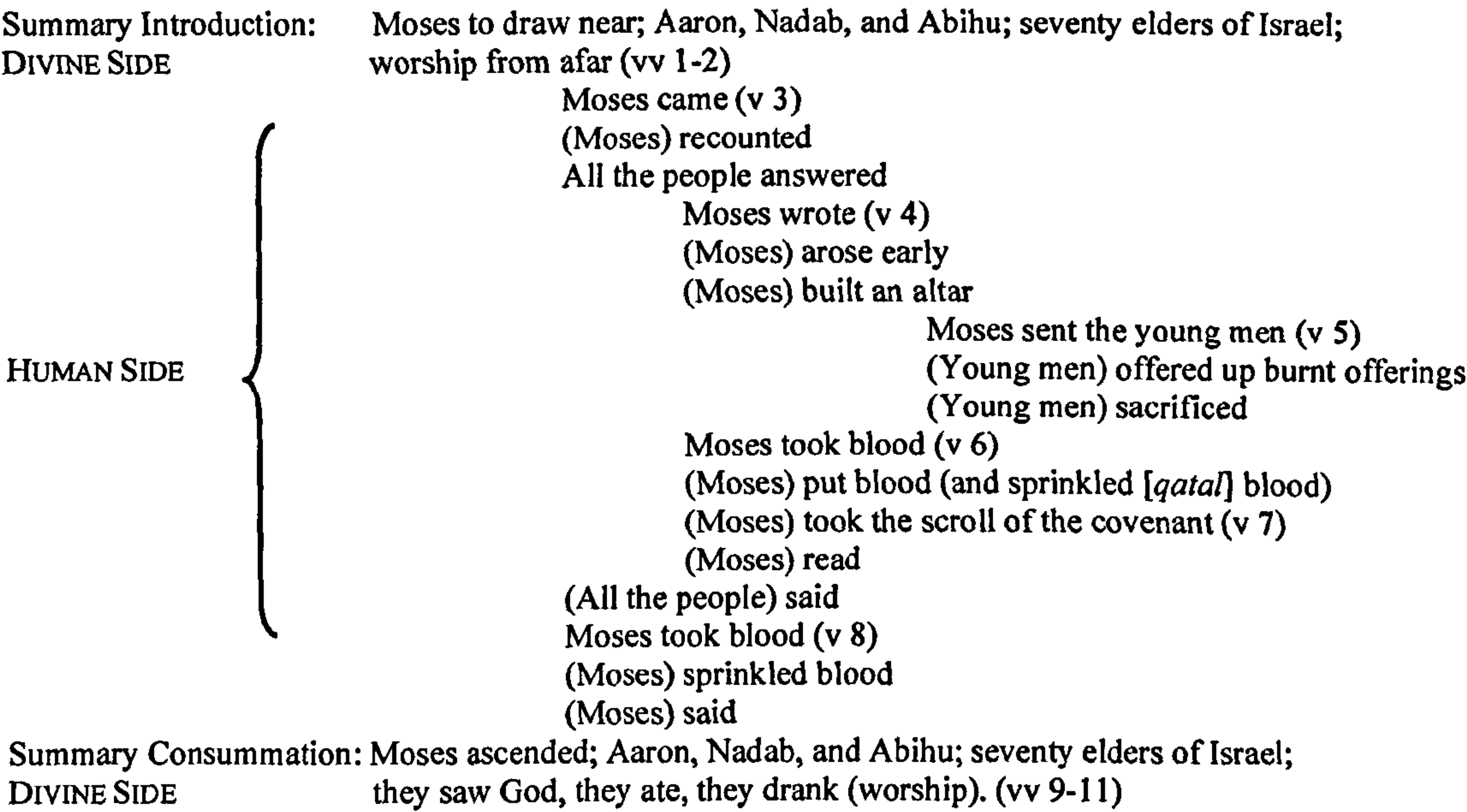
²⁵⁶ T.B. Dozeman brings out this vertical structuring (*God on the Mountain*, 25). "The result of this vertical structure is that the liturgical events that take place at the base of the cosmic mountain acquire the authority of being anchored in divine commands at the summit of the mountain" (29).

²⁵⁷ S.G. Vincent, "Exegesis of Exodus 24.1-11" (unpublished paper, 1984) 4-5, as quoted in J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 179. Though he doesn't work it out, G.C. Chirichigno notes that section 24.1-9 forms the concentric pattern ABCDXD'C'B'A', isolating the ritual acceptance of the covenant ("The Narrative Structure

- A Moses and elders instructed to ascend and worship (vv 1-2)
- B Words of YHWH/ affirmation of the people (v 3: “All YHWH has spoken we will do”)
- C Words written by Moses (v 4a)
- D Sacrifices and blood ceremony (vv 4b-6)
- C’ Words (book) read by Moses (v 7a)
- B’ Words of YHWH/ affirmation of the people (vv 7b-8: “All YHWH has spoken we will do”)
- A’ Moses and elders ascend and worship (vv 9-11)

The centrality of the sacrifice ritual is further reinforced by the pattern of the *wayyiqtol*

subjects:²⁵⁸



The great statement that YHWH “did not send (שְׁלַח) his hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל)” (v 11) so that they might gaze upon him enthroned in his heavenly temple,²⁵⁹

of Exod 19-24,” 478). Y. Avishur (“Revelation at Sinai,” 192) outlines vv 1-9 chiastically with v 4 (“And Moses wrote...”) as the pivot.

²⁵⁸ The Divine versus human side of the event is brought out by F. Polak as an *inclusio* (“Theophany and Mediator,” 138). J.W. Hilber offers the following pattern (“Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 179):

- v 1 Moses (spoken to [object of verb put in emphatic position])
- v 2 Moses (alone shall ascend)
- v 3 Moses (came and recounted)
- v 4 Moses (wrote words)
- v 5 young men (offered sacrifices)
- v 6 Moses (took blood)
- v 7 Moses (took book)
- v 8 Moses (took blood)
- v 9 Moses (ascended *et. al.*)
- vv 10-11 “nobles” (beheld God, ate and drank; the consummation of sacrifice)

and eat and drink with him, is thematically and textually linked to v 5: “And (Moses) sent (וַיִּשְׁלַח) the young men of the sons of Israel (בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל), and they offered up burnt offerings and they sacrificed peace-sacrifices to YHWH.” Ritual sacrifice within the context of covenant,²⁶⁰ then, is the solution to the problem posed by the Presence of God. Israel may corporately (and representatively) draw near to YHWH via cultic sacrifice. The sacrifices, indeed, form the pivot of a triad based on the stem *ʿlh*:

v 1: Now he said to Moses, “Ascend (עָלָה) to YHWH...”

v 5b: and they (the young men) offered up burnt offerings (וַיִּעֲלֶה עֹלֹת)...

v 9: And Moses ascended (וַיַּעֲלֶה)...

“Sacrifice ‘mediates’ the relationship between God and a sinful people. Sin alienates people from the presence of the holy God, and only through sacrifice can that relationship be restored.”²⁶¹

One ascends, then, via the ascension of sacrifice.²⁶² Priestly duty being primarily about facilitating the crossing of boundaries²⁶³ from the profane to the sacred explains why the fundamental priestly role was not slaying the sacrificial animal (most often performed by the laity), but the burning of some or all of it upon the altar so as to transfer it from the profane realm

²⁵⁹ See T.B. Dozeman, *God on the Mountain*, 114-16. C. Dohmen suggests this vision of Exod 24.10 fulfills the promise of Gen 22.14, linking the passages by their use of *ראה* (*Exodus 19-40*, 215).

²⁶⁰ However, D.J. McCarthy (*Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* [AnaBib 21; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1963] 161-64, 173), while recognizing the ritual at the foot of the mountain (24.3b-8) and the meal on the mountain (24.1, 9-11) as deriving from ancient traditions, nonetheless believes the emphasis to be cultic rather than covenantal/legal. These concepts are not, however, mutually exclusive. See F.H. Polak, “The Covenant at Mount Sinai,” 121 (along with bibliography in fns 7-9).

²⁶¹ J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185. T.E. Fretheim notes, further, that “the sacrificial system in Leviticus 1-9 must be seen as part of God’s response to Israel’s sin and God’s interaction with Moses, narrated in Exodus 32-34” (“Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 230).

²⁶² An interesting thematically parallel idea is found in the birth narrative of Samson where the Angel of YHWH ascends to heaven via the flame of the altar (cf. Judges 13.16-20). It is the Angel’s identification with the flame, what’s more, that identifies him with YHWH so that they fall down prostrate—a point supporting the contention made earlier that the altar, or at least the flame upon the altar, is representative of YHWH.

²⁶³ R.D. Nelson (*Raising Up a Faithful Priest*) says: “The Hebrew Bible, therefore, defined priesthood by the issue of ‘access’ (Lev 10.3; Ezek 44.15-16). Priests were those who could stand before Yahweh to serve (Deut 10.8), those who might approach Yahweh (Exod 19.22), enter Yahweh’s presence (Exod 28.35), or go up to the altar (1 Sam 2.28). This pivotal right of access was denied the blemished priest (Lev 21.23) and to laypeople and Levites (Num 16.40). Access was what distinguished the practicing priest from the rest of Israel: ‘I chose him from all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense’ (1 Sam 2.28)” (61-62).

of the earth to the heavenly realm and ownership of YHWH.²⁶⁴ Paralleling the mountain ascent into the theophanic cloud, and priestly entrance into the holy of holies via the cloud of incense, ascent via the altar smoke fits the general idea that clouds usher one into God's Presence.²⁶⁵ Burning the sacrifice upon the altar, the exclusive right of priests, then, was primarily about *transfer* via ascent, so that the altar with its fiery summit functioned as a cosmic mountain, as the intersection and transition between the profane and sacred, the earthly and the heavenly.²⁶⁶ As Moses entered into the cloud of the fiery Presence of God upon Sinai's summit (Exod 24.17, 18), so the sacrificial victim ascended YHWH's domain via the fire, ascending in smoke.

Thus the worship that began at the foot of the mountain with sacrifice finds consummation in the Presence of God upon the mountain²⁶⁷—both aspects of worship, further, being representative: the young men (of the sons of Israel) below, and the elder nobles (of the sons of Israel) above. The above *wayyiqtol* outline further demonstrates both the *inclusio* frame and the dynamic between the events at the foot of the mountain and those upon it:

Table fellowship around the covenant meal climaxed their worship of God. This is highlighted by the chiasmic parallelism between vv 9-11 and vv 1-2. In vv 1-2 they are commanded to ascend for worship. Parallel to this command, they ascend and celebrate by eating in God's presence the peace offerings sacrificed at the foot of the mountain during covenant ratification.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 59: "In Israel it was the priest who facilitated these ritual 'line-breaking' movements across barriers. ...As we have seen, lay sacrifice was the norm in the earlier period of Israelite religion, either at an altar under priestly supervision (1 Sam 1.3-5, 24-25; 2.12-16) or with no priest present at all (Judg 6.25-26; 13.15-20; perhaps 1 Sam 9). Even in the Priestly Code, the lay offerer retained some responsibility for killing the animal (Lev 1.5; 3.2, 8; 4.24-25), as well as skinning and washing it (Lev 1.6, 9), although the fact is sometimes obscured in translations. The fundamental priestly role involved not the death of the victim, but the burning of some or all of it on the altar and the manipulation of the victim's blood. In fact, the slaughter of the victim was by no means the most important moment in the ritual sacrifice. The essence of Israelite sacrifice was the transfer of the animal to the realm or ownership of God."

²⁶⁵ Cf. C. Fletcher-Louis, "The High Priest as Divine Mediator," 166, 176, 180-82, where he relates this point to the "son of man" figure in Dan 7.9 and the priestly Enoch of *1 Enoch* 14.8. Cf. *idem.*, "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JSHJ* 5.1 (2007) 58.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 60-1. Nelson states strikingly that the "altar fire was a pipeline into the other world, vaporizing a burnt offering, the fat of a communion sacrifice, some grain, or even wine (Num 15.7), up to Yahweh's domain" (60).

²⁶⁷ Cf. J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 183. Hilber defines that worship helpfully as a "response to the covenant relationship, which is characterized by God's [P]resence, defined by his word and mediated through sacrifice" (184). F. Polak ("The Covenant at Mount Sinai," 132) states that "the festive meal at Mount Sinai is held at the very home of the God of Israel, on the divine mountain. This meal, then, embodies a theophany...."

²⁶⁸ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 184.

CONCLUSION

However the altar is understood, its cultic significance as an aspect of worship is yet useful to the pattern consistently found in the other narratives: through the waters → to the mountain → for worship. This pattern in mind, moreover, it is interesting that in the construct of the tabernacle, Aaron and his sons would wash themselves at the laver (cosmic waters?) upon every approach to the altar (cosmic mountain?).²⁶⁹ Furthermore, Sailhamer delineates several parallels between the altar of Noah and that of Moses, significant as each is found within the overall pattern we have been considering:

- (1) The building of the altar in both accounts follows a major act of God's salvation—God's rescue of Noah from the Flood and God's deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt;
- (2) the altar and the offering in both accounts mark the establishment of a "covenant" with God (Gen 9.9; Exod 24.7);
- (3) the outcome of both covenants is God's "blessing" (Gen 9.1; Exod 23.25);
- (4) the central provisions in both covenants are protection from "wild animals" (Gen 9.2; Exod 23.29) and human enemies (Gen 9.5-6; Exod 23.22);
- (5) both accounts mention specifically that the "land" will be preserved from destruction (Gen 9.11; Exod 23.29);
- (6) in Genesis the visible "sign" of the establishment of the covenant is the rainbow in the "clouds" (Gen 9.13-17), and in Exodus the conclusion of the covenant making is marked by the appearance of the glory of God in the "clouds" (Exod 24.15) that cover the mountain;
- (7) both covenants give stipulations which the people must obey (Gen 9.4; Exod 24.3).²⁷⁰

To summarize this section, we quote Hilber's significant statement:

In Exodus 24, deity and humanity meet in communion on the cosmic mountain for a mutual act of worship and creation. The reward of this worship is theocratic rest and life in YHWH's presence (Gen 3.8; cf. Exod 33.14: "My presence shall go with you; I will give you rest"). Perhaps the manner of worship experienced in Exodus 24 reflects a pattern inherent in the divine ordering of creation. It reveals the framework of God's design for the ideal universe....Contextually the worship of Exod 24.1-11 is linked with the creation of a new community after the pattern of creation of the cosmos (24.11-18).²⁷¹

Through the waters to the mountain of God for worship, we are suggesting, constitutes that pattern.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Ex 40.32. Furthermore, the approach to the altar was eastward (this is made explicit in Ezek 43.17).

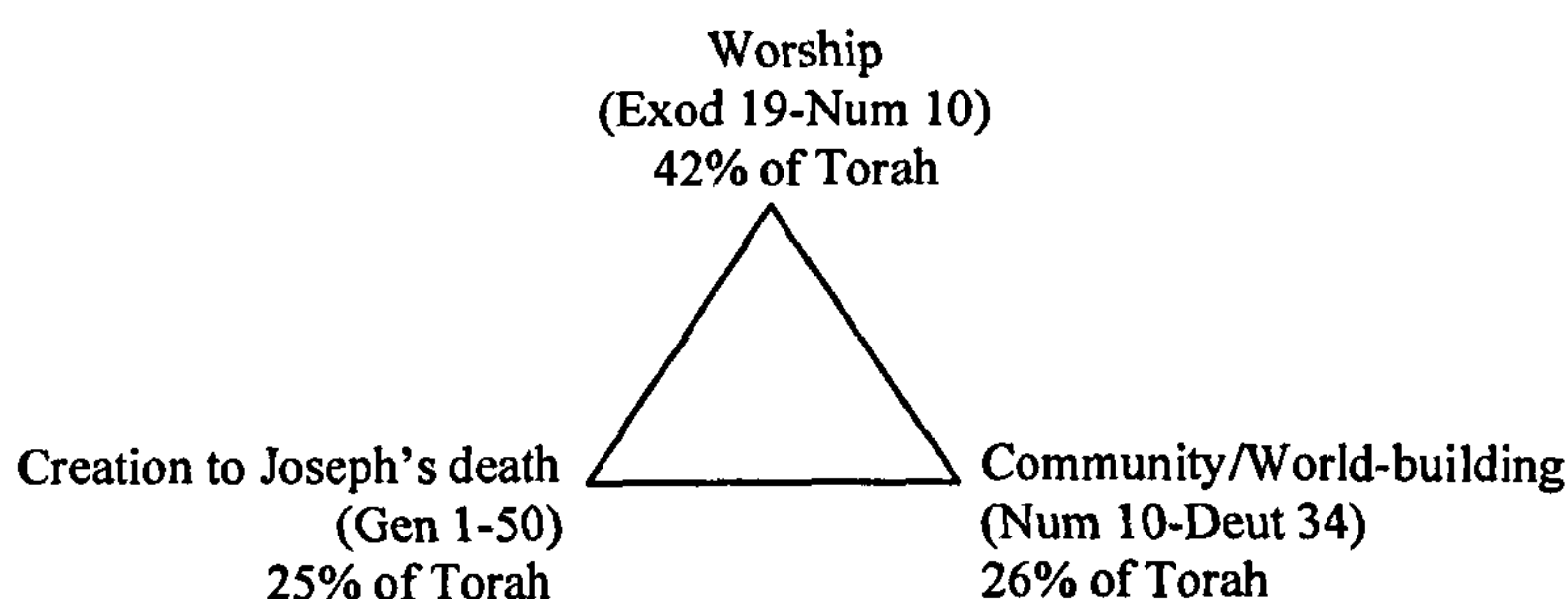
²⁷⁰ J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 128-29.

²⁷¹ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 186. Hilber draws a further correspondence between Exod 24 and the eschatological banquet, not how "God's people will spend eternity with Christ worshipping on the holy mountain (Rev 21.3, 10), where twelve stones stand for the representatives of God's people (21.14) and pure gems pave the walkway for the sacrificial Lamb of God (21.21-22). This place of worship is the final 'new creation' of which the creation of the covenant community on Mount Sinai was only a foreshadowing" (188).

III. THE CULTUS OF ISRAEL: EXODUS 25-40

A. *The Centrality of the Tabernacle Cultus*²⁷²

That the narratives leading up to the tabernacle have had its cultus in view as a major goal may be surmised by its centrality in the Torah. Unfolding through the events at Sinai recorded in Exodus 19 through Numbers 10, worship is the apex of the Torah's vision.²⁷³ The centrality of worship is manifest by the sheer amount of narrative dedicated to it.²⁷⁴



Even these figures are misleading, moreover, in as much as—with the book of Genesis as our prime example—much of the literature outside Exod 19-Num 10 has also been demonstrated to be concerned with cultic matters and likely in such a way as to anticipate Israel's tabernacle/temple cultus.²⁷⁵ More narrowly, chs 19-40 of Exodus may be considered, formally, a meticulously composed, coherent story that culminates with the Glory-cloud's descent upon the

²⁷² We continue here our canonical and biblical theological approach. For discussion of the Tabernacle from a historical perspective, see F.M. Cross, Jr., "The Tabernacle," 45-68; *idem.*, "The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research"; R. de Vaux, *Les Institutions de l' Ancien Testament* II: 125-26; M. Haran, "Shiloh and Jerusalem: the Origin of the Priestly Tradition in the Pentateuch," *JBL* 81.1 (1962) 14-24; V.W. Rabe, "The Identity of the Priestly Tabernacle," *JNES* 25.2 (1966) 132-34; W.H. Shea, "New Light on the Exodus and on the Construction of the Tabernacle: Gerster's Protosinaitic Inscription No. 1," *AUSS* 25.1 (1987) 73-96; G.J. Wenham, "Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary," *TynBull* 22 (1971) 103-18.

²⁷³ S.E. Balentine, *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999) 66.

²⁷⁴ This figure combines Balentine's information (*The Torah's Vision of Worship*, 67-8). Cf. E.G. Newing ("Rhetorical and Theological Analysis of the Hexateuch," 7-11) for the divine Presence of Exod 33, within the Sinai Covenant (Exod 19-Num 10), being central to the Hexateuch.

²⁷⁵ G.J. Wenham notes, e.g., how the high points of Genesis involve sacrifice (Cain/Abel - Gen 4, Noah - 8, Abraham - 22) ("The Akedah: A Paradigm," pp 399-404 in *Pomegranates & Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, A. Hurvitz, eds. [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994]), and S.D. Walters reads the *akedah* account of Gen 22 as prefiguring the entire cultic system ("Wood, Sand and Stars: Structure and Theology in Gn 22:1-19," *TJT* 3.2 [1987] 301-30).

completed tabernacle.²⁷⁶ Justifiably, then, Davies believes “worship” has a strong claim to be the central theological theme of Exodus, linking together salvation, covenant, and law—a theology, what’s more, going back as far as can be discerned in the history of the tradition.²⁷⁷ Now beyond all else to which the tabernacle/הַמִּשְׁכָּן cultus and its rituals pertain, one must keep in view the fundamental understanding of it as the dwelling/שֹׁכֵן of God (cf. Exod 25.8-9; 29.45-46), so that “worship” may be defined broadly as “dwelling in the divine Presence.”

The building of the tabernacle, then, with the establishment of its cult, may be seen as a major goal of the Exodus—a goal that includes the constitution of Israel as cultic community (עֵדָה ‘edah) living in the divine Presence.²⁷⁸ This goal is evident not only by the centrality of worship in the Torah, but also by explicit statement. At the very outset of the tabernacle narrative, YHWH’s purpose is manifested: *Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them* (Exod 25.8). This narrative goal is repeated in 29.45-6:

I will dwell among the sons of Israel, and I will be their God. They shall know that I am YHWH their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am YHWH their God.

That these explicit lines are not merely incidental but programmatic is evident, further, by the lengthy description of the follow-through on the “let them make me a sanctuary” directive.

²⁷⁶ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 100. Hauge, who suggests that Ps 24 represents “*in nuce* a version of the reading of the Exodus story,” posits the coherent composition of what may be considered two separate blocks of material in Exodus, i.e., chs. 19-24 and 25-40, by showing their parallel in microcosm: vv 3-6 and 7-10 of Ps 24 (100-15, 143-51). He points out the comparable formal structure: as Ps 24 moves from the motif of human ascent in the context of mountain imagery to the motif of divine descent in the context of temple imagery, so the narrative of Exod 19-40 moves from the human ascent of Sinai to the divine Glory’s descent upon the tabernacle, both passages also sharing Torah motifs. He also notes how the role of Moses parallels the “worthy ascender” in Ps 24 who may expect to be met by the divine descender (107), and how the Torah motif appears to emphasize the unworthiness of the Israelites to ascend in the Sinai pericope (149).

²⁷⁷ G. Davies, “The Theology of Exodus,” 138, 149. Along with worship, Davies includes the ideas of divine Presence, encounter with God, and holiness. The theological concern with worship, high on the agenda of the final compiler/redactor, has been largely ignored, Davies suggests, because of the frequent tendency of Pentateuchal scholarship to sideline the theology of the cult (142).

²⁷⁸ B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 86, 107. G. von Rad similarly states that “P is utterly serious in wanting to show that the cult which entered history in the people of Israel is the goal of the origin and development of the world. Creation itself was designed to lead to this Israel” (*Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1 [1962; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 233-34). G. Davies notes how, after the covenant is renewed in 34.10-28, “it is with Israel *specifically* as a worship community” (“The Theology of Exodus,” 144 [emphasis added]).

While modern sensibilities find tedious the mass of repetitive material constituting thirteen of the remaining sixteen chapters of Exodus, yet from the ANE perspective this concentration manifestly brings one to the heart of the narrative.²⁷⁹ The overall movement from slavery to worship, from building for Pharaoh to building for YHWH²⁸⁰ is in line with parallel ANE literature, such as the Ugaritic epic of Baal and the Babylonian “Epic of Creation,” whereby the building of a victorious deity’s house/temple forms the epic’s climax.²⁸¹ Thus, comparisons with other building narratives from the Bible (1 Kgs 5.15-9.25) and Mesopotamian and Ugaritic sources manifest, not only that the tabernacle story’s overall structure is deliberate and well ordered, following a standard literary pattern or building genre,²⁸² but also the ideological weight of the tabernacle itself. The building section within the larger cycle, furthermore, is itself unified by the recurrent theme that Moses was shown the “pattern” (תַּבְנִית *tabnît*) of the tabernacle by God while he was on the mountain (25.9, 40, 26.30, 37.8),²⁸³ a theme functioning to underscore the importance of the cultus.²⁸⁴ Because insufficient consideration of the

²⁷⁹ P. Enns, *Exodus*, 506.

²⁸⁰ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 263-64.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* Cf. P. Miller, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel*, 117; F.M. Cross Jr., “The Divine Warrior in Israel’s Early Cult,” 19ff. A.C. Leder, posits that the kingship pattern accounts for the entire Exodus narrative and climaxes in a building project, and offers a comparison among the *Enuma elish*, the Baal conflict, and Exodus in his “The Coherence of Exodus,” 262-65. Cf. T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 573-74. For *Enuma elish* see A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis: The Story of Creation*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1969). For the Baal and Yamm story, see A. Herdner, *Corpus des tablettes en cunéiformes alphabétiques découvertes à Ras Shamra - Ugarit de 1929 à 1939*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale et librairie orientale Paul Geuthner, 1963). Cf. also K.L. Sparks, “Enuma Elish and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism,” *JBL* 126.4 (2007) 625-48 (esp. 635-42).

²⁸² V.A. Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of the Building of the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105.1 (1985) 21-30. This building genre also supports the coherence of the Tabernacle story, casting “serious doubts upon the opinion expressed by scholars such as Martin Noth that the material in Ex 35-36.7 was no more than the result of ‘making obvious narrative constructions,’” for the parallel stories never contain the command to build section in isolation but in fact often manifest just the reverse, containing only the fulfillment section (29).

²⁸³ B.A. Levine, “Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch,” *JAOS* 85.3 (1965) 308. Cf. F.M. Cross Jr., “The Tabernacle,” 54.

²⁸⁴ Indeed, what Kleinig expresses concerning Chronicles is no less true of Exodus: “The reason for this interest in the divine institution of the sacrificial cult is clear. Worship was effective and beneficial only as long as it was performed in accordance with divine law. In fact, its divine institution empowered it, so that, by its enactment, the Lord himself received his people, like a king his petitioners, and acted in their favor” (J.W. Kleinig, *The Lord’s Song: The Basis, Function, and Significance of Choral Music in Chronicles* [JSOTSup 156; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993] 31).

tabernacle account necessarily results in a “superficial grasp” of the book’s significance,²⁸⁵ the literary weight of the tabernacle material must be balanced by its theological weight. The dramatic question—and tension—of how the prospect of a return to dwelling in the divine Presence will be made possible via a tabernacle constructed according to the divinely revealed heavenly “pattern,” and this prospect in light of the thunderous fury of the fiery Presence just experienced at Sinai—all this must be impressed upon the reader. The balance of the book of Exodus, to summarize, is devoted to the tabernacle, the establishment of which, far from being a subsidiary interpolation, is the climax of the epic, the denouement toward which that narrative has progressed.²⁸⁶

Glimpsing now a sketch of the tabernacle’s centrality within the narrative progression leading up to it, its function as denouement will appear more clearly. As the creation account of Gen 1-3 would surely have catechized its original audience, the high goal of worshipping the Creator in the glory of his Presence atop the holy mount had been frustrated by Adam’s transgression and the consequent exile from the divine Presence.²⁸⁷ The ensuing narrative, rather than normalizing life outside of Eden (so as to make the account merely a story about “lost innocence” or “why things are the way they are,” i.e., an etiology), intensifies the predicament and underscores the issue as crucial to the drama (i.e., eschatology). For example, the use of “to banish” גרש in the Cain narrative (4.14; cf. 3.24) suggests that “in some sense Cain’s exile is a repetition and intensification of Adam and Eve’s exile.”²⁸⁸ This intensification reaches an apex

²⁸⁵ Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 16. T.E. Fretheim notes rightly that having nearly one-third of Exodus devoted to the Tabernacle at the least demonstrates the importance of worship to the narrator (*Exodus*, 263).

²⁸⁶ W.W. Hallo, “Exodus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” pp 367-77 in *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, W.G. Plaut, ed. (New York: UAHC, 1981) 376-77.

²⁸⁷ A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 254. Leder rightly relates this to Israel’s later exile from the Presence of God as related in Joshua-Kings (255).

²⁸⁸ R. Hendel, “Leitwort Style in the J Primeval Narrative,” pp 93-109 in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R.E. Friedman on his Sixtieth Birthday*, S. Dolansky, ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 99.

as the profanation of creation (as macro-temple) finally calls for an end/return to chaos, righteous Noah, with his household and a remnant of creatures, being delivered via an ark whose plans are divinely revealed, one of several features serving to portray it as a kind of typological temple. The scattering from the Tower of Babel may be interpreted, via an “anti-gate liturgy” pattern, as a further removal from the Presence of God whose own deliberate plan for allowing re-entrance into the divine Presence begins with the call of Abraham and culminates in the divine in-filling of the tabernacle, Babel and the tabernacle being antipodes in the narrative arc.²⁸⁹ New mediated access to that Presence of life thus becomes, not merely a means of worship for the Israelite, but the means by which the order and purpose of creation is reestablished—that is, creation and cult are of a piece.²⁹⁰ Thus Hurowitz is correct in positing that the “crucial event around which all the activities focus is God’s entry and manifestation within the newly built abode.”²⁹¹ If, as we have seen, the creation account is oriented toward the Sabbath, i.e., life in the divine Presence, then it makes sense that the account of history itself should be like oriented. Understanding the loss of the divine Presence as the central catastrophe of the biblical drama, then one begins to see the tabernacle (*mishkan*), the locus of God’s Presence in the midst of his people,²⁹² as the (at least initial) denouement.²⁹³ This denouement is in accord with the general tenor of the

²⁸⁹ The “stairway” connecting heaven and earth is a theme running through the Tower of Babel (Gen 11.4), and Jacob (Gen 28.12, 17) narratives, culminating at the end of Exodus. Cf. J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 51.

²⁹⁰ T.E. Fretheim, “Reclamation of Creation,” 364: “Israelite worship is a means by which the world is created and re-created in every new ritual activity.” “At one level,” Fretheim continues, “commands regarding worship as a creational reality are implicit in the story of Cain and Abel and the appropriateness of their offerings (cf. also Gen 2.1-3; 4.26; 8.20-21)” (364). L. Brisman, “On the Divine Presence in Exodus,” 106, similarly states that “man’s worship represents an ongoing opportunity to participate in the work of Creation.”

²⁹¹ V.A. Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105.1 (1985) 22. Cf. J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 499.

²⁹² B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 108.

²⁹³ Cf. G. Davies’s point (“The Theology of Exodus,” 140, 150) that while Exod 40 is not the end of the story (vv 36-38, e.g., being forward-looking), it does exhibit closure (vv 33-35). T.E. Fretheim captures well the centrality of the divine Presence to the drama of the tabernacle section, dealing as it does with “the forms of worship that are to provide the vehicle for the close divine presence with Israel on its journey. Fundamentally, it signals a change in the way God is present with Israel: (1) The *occasional* appearance of God on the mountain...will become

Pentateuch in which numerous stories reflect points of priestly interest.²⁹⁴ The pattern of

Exodus, then, offers a glimpse, a micro-narrative, of the entire biblical narrative itself, whether expanded to the Pentateuch or, indeed, to the Christian canon.²⁹⁵

B. *From Creation to the Tabernacle*

Creating the cosmos and building the tabernacle are literarily linked, the latter being a microcosm of the former.²⁹⁶ Blenkinsopp identifies precisely these two accounts as the first two major “nodal points” of (P’s narrative in) the Pentateuch: the creation of the cosmos as a precondition for worship (Gen 1.1-2.4a), and the building and dedication of the wilderness

the *ongoing* presence of God with Israel. (2) The *distance* of the divine presence from the people will no longer be associated with the remote top of a mountain but with a dwelling place in the center of the camp. God comes down to be with the people at close, even intimate, range; they no longer need to ascend to God. (3) The divine dwelling will no longer be a *fixed place*. God’s dwelling place will be portable, on the move with the people of God. Overall, these chapters represent a climax not only in Israel’s journey, but in God’s journey” (*Exodus*, 264 [emphasis original]). We are in agreement with the general tenor of Fretheim’s statement, although he does not appear to factor in adequately the Tabernacle’s being a model Sinai so that the continuities (e.g., the High Priest’s sole privilege of entering the Holy of holies—a kind of “ascent,” and the mountain’s no less being at the “center of the camp” amidst the people, etc.) appear unjustly understated. The main advantage of the movement from Sinai to Tabernacle, to our mind, involves the ability to continue the Sinai experience (Fretheim’s third point) and to “incarnate” God’s Presence. Fretheim rightly notes that the “sanctuary is not simply a symbol of the divine presence, it is *an actual vehicle for divine immanence*” (315, emphasis original).

²⁹⁴ P.J. Budd, “Priestly Instruction in Pre-Exilic Israel,” *VT* 23.1 (1973) 6.

²⁹⁵ A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 255-56 (cf. 266-67, 257): “The entire biblical narrative, then, develops the problem of humanity’s refusal of divine instruction and the consequent exile from the presence of God and employs a sequence of events, complications, and conflicts that bring God’s people into his presence again, there to be instructed for life in that divine presence. Within this larger narrative, the Pentateuch develops a plot that depicts a particular community, Abraham’s descendents, on the way to the presence of God, i.e., the Promised Land and the place the Lord chose for his name to dwell.... The narrative problem defined in Exodus 1-2, however, should also be read as an integral part of the narrative problem of the Pentateuch, defined in the opening chapters of Genesis. Briefly stated, Genesis defines the problem as humanity’s exile from the presence of God, an exile caused by Adam and Eve’s refusal of divine instruction and the consequent human defilement of the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. The narrative depicts God himself initiating the resolution of this problem by instructing Abram to leave his land and to go “to the land which I will show you” (Gen 12.1)... The narrative problem of Exodus, then, is rooted in the fundamental human problem as depicted in the opening chapters of Genesis.” Because this is so, any canonical view (of the Hebrew or Christian canon) must likely view the book of Exodus as providing something of a synopsis of or pattern for the macro-narrative.

²⁹⁶ Cf. A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 19. “The Exodus account of the instructions given to Moses for the building of the Tabernacle is widely recognized to mirror the order and details of the account of creation in Genesis 1.1-2.4. To the seven days of creation there correspond in Exodus 25-31 (the first two blocks of Tabernacle material in Exod 25-40) seven speeches to Moses (Exod 25.1-30.10; 30.11-16; 30.17-21; 30.22-33; 30.34-38; 31.1-11; 31.12-17)” (C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest,” pp 81-99 in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, T.D. Alexander, S. Gathercole, eds. [Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster, 2004] 89).

sanctuary (Exod 40.1-33).²⁹⁷ While the creation may be understood legitimately in terms of a temple, it is also important to see that the tabernacle/temple constitutes something of a new creation within the old, a micro-cosmos within the macro, designed to mediate the paradisiacal Presence of the Creator. Thus one is not surprised to find the literary parallels between the creation and tabernacle narratives—already established in our study of the creation account.²⁹⁸ While not rehearsing those parallels here, we merely recall how the אֱלֹהִים of רִוּחַ is instrumental both in the building of the cosmic temple, the world (Gen 1.2), and in the micro-cosmic world, the tabernacle (Exod 31.1-11), the former amidst the chaos (תְּהוֹ) of water, the latter amidst the chaos of wilderness (תְּהוֹ, Deut 32.10).²⁹⁹ This like source of wisdom/skill/power is matched by like method, both creation and tabernacle construction featuring “separation”/ *bdl*: whereas the firmament is created to “separate” (hiphil participle of בָּרַל, *bdl*) the waters (Gen 1.6), so the

²⁹⁷ J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 113; *idem.*, “The Structure of P,” *CBQ* 38 (1976) 275-92. Therefore, if, as Propp states, “Creation is complete only when God’s reign on earth commences at Sinai” (*Exodus 1-18*, 561), then that reign must be understood as continuing via the two revealed gifts of Sinai’s summit: Torah and the tabernacle תְּבַנִּית. Or, as T.B. Dozeman has it, “the revelation of the law and the cult at the mountain of God” (*Exodus*, 349-50). For the relation of law to sacred mountains, see J.M. Lundquist, “Temple, Covenant, and Law,” 281-84. For the *tabnit*, see D.N. Freedman, “Temple without Hands,” 26; J.D. Levenson, *Sinai & Zion*, 140-41. As considered in our introductory chapter, the connection between the cosmic mountain of God, temple worship, and creation is firmly established for ANE culture. Cf. J.W. Hilber, “Theology of Worship in Exodus 24,” 185, including his brief bibliography, fn 41. He cites Ezek 28.13-15 as another pericope with the same collocation of themes: worshiping cherub/ Eden, the garden of God/ mountain of God/ creation; and mentions the following other similarities between Ex 24 and creation: “God’s [P]resence and word are prominent themes from creation as he subdued and ordered chaos (hovering Spirit, Gen 1.2; “then God said,” 1.3). As a result of ordering chaos, Sabbath celebration (i.e. worship) is made possible (2.1-3)” (186). While the relation of the Temple to the Cosmic Mountain was commonplace throughout the ANE, F. Polak nonetheless highlights the uniqueness of the events of Exod 24: “But myth is transcended by some unique features. The leader of a human nation is said to ascend the divine mountain in order to receive a law code, all those present hear the deity speaking from heaven and a human delegation actually witnesses the divine presence while eating and drinking on the mountain....On the other hand, no ancient myth parallels the Sinai theophany. In the Homeric Hymns Apollo and Demeter reveal themselves in all their power, but in order to do so Apollo descends from Parnassus, and Demeter dwells among the people of Eleusis. Nobody has ascended Parnassus to meet the deity; no Greek polis has assembled at the foot of Olympus to hear Zeus’s voice or to see the mountain tremble” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 117). One wonders why, however, Polak did not consider more relevant ANE literature (Baal Cycle, Gilgamesh, etc.) where an argument may be made, perhaps, for at least some affinities. He is correct, to be sure, in pointing out the singular privilege of Moses (118).

²⁹⁸ See summary in J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood: Literary and Intertextual Perspectives on the Image of Israel in Exodus 19.6* (JSOTSup 395; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 144-49.

²⁹⁹ This observation is noted in many commentaries, e.g., T.E. Fretheim notes the following correspondences between Creation and Tabernacle: (1) the spirit of God; (2) new year’s day; (3) seven divine speeches; (4) overall importance given to shape and design; (5) positive evaluation upon completion of work (*Exodus*, 269-71).

tabernacle veil is to “separate” (וַהֲבַדֵּי־לָהּ) the holy place from the holiest place (Ex 26.33).³⁰⁰

Finally, the chronology of the building projects are also linked: the consecration of the tabernacle lasted seven days, a heptadic pattern connected to the Sabbath ordinances.³⁰¹ Perhaps above all other parallels, it is the Sabbath linking of the tabernacle to creation that generates the theological profundity and function of the cultus: via the mediation of the tabernacle cultus alone, the purpose of creation may be realized.³⁰² The Sabbath, thus, forms a bridge, an *inclusio*, linking creation with cultus as its climax,³⁰³ the tabernacle manifestly created as a mini-cosmos oriented to the Sabbath.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ P.H. Seely, “The Firmament and the Water Above,” 40.

³⁰¹ J.L. Morrow, “Creation and Liturgy,” 5. The Sabbath, in fact, appears to tie the creation (Gen 2.1-3), deluge (Gen 8.6-12), Sinai (Exod 24.16-18), and tabernacle accounts (Exod 35.1-3), the tabernacle not only being completed in seven speeches (with the seventh addressing the Sabbath) and by seven acts of Moses who did “just as YHWH commanded” (cf. Exod 40.19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32), but structurally forming something of an inner frame in the tabernacle pericope. Exod 40.16 is a general summary, serving as a frame with v 33. D. Janzen, summing up the parallels noted by J. Levenson and F. Gorman, also mentions the seven appearances of YHWH to Moses in the sacrificial instructions of Lev 1-7 (“Priestly Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible,” 43).

Tabernacle Instructions: 25-30

Sabbath: 31.12-17

Idolatry: 32-34

Sabbath: 35.1-3

Tabernacle Construction: 35.4-40.16

A.C. Leder (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 26) also notes that the “thematic change in 35.1-3 takes the reader back to the subject of the Sabbath, treated immediately before the narrative of Israel’s corruption of the Lord’s presence (31.12-17).” Leder further notes: “Its [the Sabbath’s] narrative location at the end of the instruction and the beginning of the construction account, however, is crucial because it argues for an intimate connection between Sabbath and the building of the tabernacle” (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 29). B.S. Childs calls the Sabbath and Tabernacle two sides of the same coin, both testifying to the reign of God over his creation (*Exodus*, 584-93). Cf. also N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 213-15; D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*.

³⁰² J.D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *JR* 64.3 (1984) 288: “Thus, the account of the construction of the Tabernacle is punctuated by the injunction to observe the Sabbath in *imitatione Dei* (Ex 31.12-17, 35.1-3). The two institutions, each a memorial and, more than that, an actualization of the aboriginal creative act, are woven together not in a purposeless, mindless redaction but in a profound and unitive theological statement. Sabbath and sanctuary partake of the same reality; they proceed, *pari passu*, from the same foundational event, to which they testify and even provide access. In a cryptic apodictic pronouncement in Leviticus, they appear twice as if they were formulaic pairs: “My Sabbaths you are to observe/And my Sanctuary you are to revere: I am YHWH” (Lev 19.30, 26.2).” Cf. also Paul Elbert, “Genesis 1 and the Spirit: A Narrative-Rhetorical Ancient Near Eastern Reading in Light of Modern Science,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 15.1 (2006) 27ff.

³⁰³ B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 108.

³⁰⁴ The Sabbath, then, must be considered of a piece with temple theology, serves to link tabernacle construction with creation, a connection in which Rabbinic literature delights. See D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*. “Tabernacle and sabbath are conceptually joined not only in the sabbath frame, but as early as the first creation account” (144). For Rabbinic literature, cf. P. Enns, *Exodus*, 507 and fn 2.

The cosmological parallels between creation and the tabernacle are in accord, further, with the cosmological import of several of the tabernacle appurtenances, as later explained within the temple system.³⁰⁵ The altar is called *הַרְאֵל* (also referred to as *אַרְאֵל*) “the mountain of God” (Ezek 43.15-16) with its base named *חֵיק הָאָרֶץ* “the bosom of the earth” (Ezek 43.14).³⁰⁶ The Basin *מוֹצֵק הַיָּם* as well is likely to be read with cosmic significance as “The Sea has been restrained!”³⁰⁷ It also appears evident that the menorah was a stylized tree of life (cf. Exod 25.31-40).³⁰⁸ The tabernacle, then, “is a microcosm of creation, the world order as God intended it writ small in Israel.”³⁰⁹ The parallels thus established, when YHWH fills the tabernacle, this is “a sign that the new ‘creation’ has been achieved.”³¹⁰ Interestingly, the sixth century Egyptian Christian Cosmas, in his book *Christian Topography*, posited that the creation account of Genesis 1 was Moses’ description of the *תְּבִינָת* shown him atop Sinai, and that “the tabernacle prepared by Moses in the wilderness...was a type and copy of the whole world”:

Then when he [Moses] had come down from the Mountain he was ordered by God to make the tabernacle, which was a representation of what he had seen on the Mountain, namely, an impress of the world. ...Since therefore it had been shown him how God made the heaven and the earth, and how on the second day he made the firmament in the middle between them, and thus made the one place into two places, so Moses, in like manner, in accordance with the pattern which he had seen, made the tabernacle and placed the veil in the middle and by this division made the one tabernacle into two, the inner and the outer.³¹¹

³⁰⁵ S. Il Kang, “The ‘Molten Sea,’ or Is It?” *Bib* 89 (2008) 102.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 101-03. This would, to be sure, be a direct link to Genesis 1, the constraining of the Sea being a major expression of YHWH’s kingship (cf. Gen 1; 6-9; Ex 14-15; Ps 104.9; 33.7; Job 26.10; Jer 5.22). Il Kang ties the Basin to a possible New Year’s enthronement festival whereby YHWH’s kingship was declared (cf. Ps 89). Cf. Gen 1.9-10 and 1 Kings 7.23. D. Parry (“Garden of Eden,” 138) also makes this correlation. Cf. J.L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974) 52.

³⁰⁸ See C.L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah* (Missoula: Scholars, 1976) 36-38; G. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism,” 401; D. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 128-29; J.V. Fesko, *Last Things First*, 62.

³⁰⁹ T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 238. Fretheim further writes: “Generally, the worship of God at the tabernacle is a world-creating activity, a God-given way for the community of faith to participate in God’s work of recreating a new world, for Israel and for all” (238).

³¹⁰ Peter J. Kearney, “Creation and Liturgy: The P Redaction of Ex 25-40,” pp. 375-387 in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 89.3 (1977) 381.

³¹¹ Cosmas, *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk*, tr. J.W. McCrindle (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1897) 24, 145, 150. Cosmas even describes the earth as a rectangular box (30ff), that is, in the shape of the Tabernacle/Temple (and, significantly, the Ark of Noah). Cf. M. Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T&T Clark, 2004) 195; *idem.*, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (2000; London: T&T Clark, 2004) 17-18.

C. From the Ark of Noah to the Tabernacle

One might also recall the “striking parallels between the tabernacle and the ark of Noah,”³¹² the ark itself a micro-cosmos, as we have argued it in the previous chapter. Again, while not rehearsing the already delineated parallels here, we merely note the general correspondence that even as “Noah did according to all that God had commanded him, thus did he” (Gen 6.22) in relation to the Ark, so “according to all that YHWH had commanded Moses, thus did the Israelites all the work” (Exod 39.42) in relation to the tabernacle, both narratives emphasizing the New Year (Gen 8.13; Exod 40.2).³¹³ When the tabernacle narrative is made to include the broader context of Exodus, then many more parallels are manifest: God “remembering” for the sake of deliverance (Gen 8.1; Exod 2.24); sending a “wind” (Gen 8.1; Exod 14.21); the appearing of “dry ground” (Gen 8.13-14; Exod 14.21-22).³¹⁴ Ross, further, captures both the parallels and the pattern (through the waters → to the mountain → for worship) when he writes: “Just as God had judged the world in Noah’s day and brought Noah’s family through the Flood, compelling them to worship the Lord with a sacrifice, so he judged Egypt and brought Israel through the waters of

³¹² T.E. Fretheim, “Because the Whole Earth is Mine,” 238.

³¹³ J. Blenkinsopp, “The Structure of P,” 283. He further notes (“Structure and Meaning,” 113): “the vision on the mountain takes place on the seventh day (24.16), the creation of the sanctuary is followed by the solemn day of rest (31.12-17; 35.1-3), and worship can finally be initiated after the seven-day sacerdotal ordination ceremony (Lev 8.33; 9.1). The wilderness sanctuary is erected on the first day of the month, that is, New Year’s Day (40.1, 17), corresponding to the first New Year’s Day of creation and the date which the purified earth emerged from the waters of the deluge (Gen 8.13).” Cf. also W.W. Hallo, “Exodus and Ancient Near Eastern Literature,” 377.

³¹⁴ J. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 127. T.E. Fretheim offers a useful summary (*Exodus*, 268-69): “Both ark and tabernacle are commanded by God, whose precise directions are communicated to the human leader, who proceeds to carry out the directions in obedient detail....At the end of the building of each (39.42-43; Gen 6.22) it is said that they did just as God had commanded....It has even been suggested that the ark of Noah is a temple structure, similar in construction to those found in Mesopotamia. This is in tune with Christian symbolism of the ark through the ages, which commonly sees it in terms of a church afloat amid the waters of chaos. Floodwaters and wilderness are the two most prominent symbols for chaos in the Old Testament. Both “sanctuaries” are portable, one on sea, one on land; they are used to carry the people through the waters/ sands of chaos. Both are viewed as a means by which the people of God can move in a secure and ordered way through a world of disorder on their way to a new creation. It is on the first day of the new year that the floodwaters abate and the covering of the ark is taken off (Gen 8.13), the same day that the tabernacle is set up and dedicated (40.2). One is thereby invited to see the building of the tabernacle in chapters 35-40 in terms of re-creation, God’s beginning again with world/Israel on the far side of apostasy.”

the Red Sea to worship and serve him on the other side.”³¹⁵ Scholars have also noted how the salvation found in the ark during the forty-day period of rain parallels that amidst the presence of the tabernacle during the forty-year period in the wilderness.³¹⁶

As mentioned already with regard to creation parallels, so now with regard to deluge parallels with the tabernacle: while it is legitimate to view the ark in terms of temple symbolism, one has not satisfied the significance of those parallels until the tabernacle itself, as the narrative goal, has subsumed something of the meaning of the ark. Likely, it is the redemptive aspect that informs the parallels between ark and tabernacle, the tabernacle constituting the divinely revealed means of refuge. Here, protology swirls into eschatology, and the cosmogonic pattern proves to be mythic in the sense of being in *illo tempore*.³¹⁷ From one perspective, it may be said that Adam’s transgression and expulsion “interrupted” the eschatological goal of the original cosmogonic pattern.³¹⁸ For our purposes, we simply note the deluge narrative, as with the creation account, has been shaped with a view to the tabernacle cultus.

D. From Mount Sinai to the Tabernacle

On Mount Sinai, Clifford notes, YHWH has his tent, and the earthly copy of the tent will mediate his Presence to his people.³¹⁹ What we would like to consider now is the narrative transition from the former to the latter. To be sure, the narrative accounts of each are linked together. For example, the motifs in Exod 24.15b-18a of (1) Sabbath chronology, (2) the כבוד YHWH, (3) use of the term שכן, and (4) the introduction speech formula ויקרא, serve to link the mountain of God

³¹⁵ A. Ross, *Genesis* (CBC; Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2008) 74.

³¹⁶ J.H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 126; B. Waltke (with C.J. Fredericks), *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 135, 152.

³¹⁷ Cf., e.g., M. Barker’s discussion, on the temple’s symbolizing the “eternal present,” *The Gate of Heaven*, 58-65. Thus, when Asaph approached “the sanctuary of God” (מִקְדָּשׁ יְיָ *miqd’šê-’ēl*), he understood “their end” (לְאַחֲרֵיהֶם *l’ahārîām*).

³¹⁸ This idea accords well with the theology developed by the author of Hebrews (chapter 4), that a Sabbath yet remains.

³¹⁹ R.J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 191.

with the tabernacle pericope, essentially transforming the covenant ceremony into a preparation in worship for the establishment of the tabernacle cult.³²⁰ More specifically, we note first, and simply, that the tabernacle structure itself comes into existence within the sacred space established by the presence of the mountain of God.³²¹ But further, and as early as the elders' vision of God on Mount Sinai in Exod 24.10-11, we find a description of the heavenly sanctuary, its blue sapphire being a common feature of temples in the ancient Near East, so that already the theophany of the mountain "gives way to temple imagery," to "the vision of God in the heavenly temple."³²² Then, of course, the תְּכֵנִית for the tabernacle is revealed precisely from Sinai's summit. Dozeman and Niccacci note, significantly, it is upon the seventh ascension that the tabernacle cultus is revealed,³²³ so that the "revelation and construction of the wilderness sanctuary participate fully in the mythology of the cosmic mountain."³²⁴ This participation in mythology also includes a sharing of terminology. Indeed, the great statement of Exod 24.16 that would ever after symbolize Sinai, namely, that "the glory of YHWH dwelled upon Mount Sinai," begins with the word מִשְׁכָּן, offering a preview of the following section's subject, the work of the מִשְׁכָּן, so that the tabernacle is a kind of miniature Sinai.³²⁵ Consistently, the cosmic mountain in Exod 15.17 (whether precisely identified with Sinai or not),³²⁶ the tabernacle (Exod

³²⁰ J. McCrory, "'Up, Up, Up, and Up': Exod 24.9-18 as the Narrative Context for the Tabernacle Instructions of Exod 25-31," *SBL Seminar Papers* (1990) 570-82. D. Gowan also considers "glory" a key term which reappears at climactic points in chs. 25-31 and 35-40, signifying that God's Presence on Sinai will now occupy the center of the camp via the Tabernacle (*Theology in Exodus*, 183).

³²¹ E. Carpenter, "Exodus 18," 105.

³²² T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 6, 563. Cf. also 567-75. He is correct, then, in stating the "vision of the heavenly temple in 24.9-11 signals the change in theme" (569), in the sense of the divine Presence being now anticipated within the context of an earthly counterpart to the heavenly Temple. Dozeman refers to the Exod 24 event as "a worship service on the cosmic mountain before the heavenly temple of God" (*God on the Mountain*, 113).

³²³ T.B. Dozeman, "Spatial Form in Exod 19.1-8a and in the larger Sinai Narrative," *Semeia* 46 (1989) 87-101; A. Niccacci, "Narrative Syntax of Exodus 19-24," 224.

³²⁴ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 574.

³²⁵ U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 316, 484. Cf. B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 638; P. Enns, *Exodus*, 493.

³²⁶ B.D. Russell convincingly does (*The Song of the Sea*, 54-55): noting "several descriptions are used for YHWH's sanctuary at Sinai: הַר נַחֲלָתְךָ "the mountain of your inheritance," מְכוֹן לִשְׁבֹתְךָ "place for your habitation," מִקְדָּשׁ "sanctuary." In Exod 25-31 and 35-40, Israel receives instructions for the construction of the Tabernacle and its

25.8; Lev 16.33), and the Jerusalem temple (1 Chron 22.19; Isa 63.18) are each referred to as *מִקְדָּשׁ* *miqdāš*.³²⁷

Now since a defining feature of any ANE temple is its being an “architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain,”³²⁸ one would expect parallels between them in that embodiment—such is, in fact, the case. In the following ways the narrative brings out the tabernacle’s function as a portable Sinai:³²⁹

- (1) the three districts of holiness common to each;
- (2) YHWH communicates with Moses from the mountaintop and the holy of holies;³³⁰

cultic paraphernalia. Significantly, in 25.8, *מִקְדָּשׁ* refers to the Tabernacle. Thus, in a sense, YHWH’s bringing and planting of his people on the sacred mountain in 15.17 point to the climax of the whole of Exodus. In 40.34-38, upon completion of the Tabernacle, the glory of YHWH fills the tent. YHWH brings the people to his holy place and then makes a tangible provision by which YHWH’s sanctuary can journey beyond Sinai.” Cf. C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 208.

³²⁷ D. Parry thus calls the tabernacle/temple a “mobile”/“man-made” mountain (“Sinai as Sanctuary and Mountain of God,” pp 482-500 in *By Study and Also by Faith*, vol. 1 in *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* [1990], accessed at: <http://farms.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=63&print>).

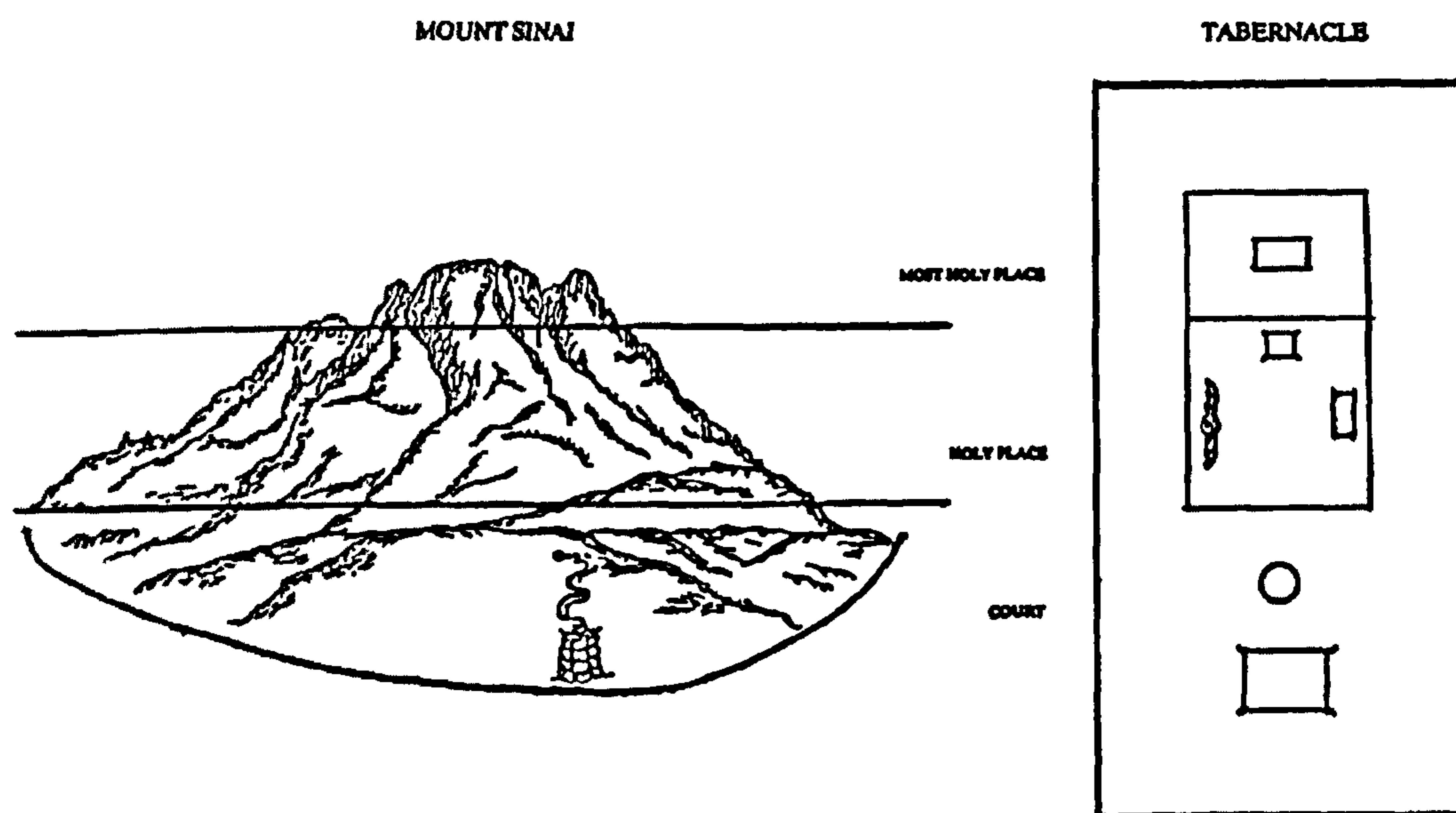
³²⁸ Indeed, this is Lundquist’s primary proposition. Cf. his “What is a Temple? A Preliminary Typology” pp 205-19 in *The Quest for the Kingdom of God: Studies in Honor of George E. Mendenhall*, H.B. Huffmon, F.A. Spina, A.R.W. Green, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) 207.

³²⁹ Cf. N.M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus*, 203-04. He further notes (237) the “function of the Tabernacle was to create a portable Sinai, a means by which a continued avenue of communication with God could be maintained. As the people move away from the mount of revelation, they need a visible, tangible symbol of God’s ever-abiding Presence in their midst. It is not surprising, then, that the same phenomenon as occurred at Sinai, related in [Ex] 24.15-17, now repeats itself. It will recur at the dedication of Solomon’s Temple, as is narrated in 1 Kings 8.10-11.” P. Enns states: “This sanctity of the mountain is expressed in its tripartite division, which a number of commentators (going back at least to the Middle Ages) have compared to the tripartite structure of the tabernacle, hinted at more clearly in [Exod] 24.1-2....According to this division, the top of the mountain, to which Moses alone has access, corresponds to the Most Holy Place. Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders have access to the mountain but not its summit; this corresponds to the Holy Place. The rest of the people stay at the foot of the mountain, which corresponds to the outer court where the laity gather....It also highlights the fact that the tabernacle itself is an earthly reflection of God’s heavenly abode. In other words, the mountain does not mirror the tabernacle; the structure of the tabernacle is patterned after the mountain” (*Exodus* [TNAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000] 391). Cf. Edwin C. Kingsbury, “The Theophany Topos and the Mountain of God,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86.2 (Jun 1967) 205-10; J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 140. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain*, 123: “In the Priestly account of the building of the Tabernacle (*miškān*) and its equipment, Moses is told to make it according to the pattern (*mišpāṭ* or *tabnîṭ*) shown him on the mountain (Ex 26.30; cf. 25.9, 40; 27.8 and Num 8.4). The text is ambiguous as to whether Moses was presented with a plan of the tent or whether he actually saw and copied the heavenly tent. At any rate, it is clear that the tent that Moses had built is a copy of the heavenly tent in accordance with the ancient religious principle, ‘like is like.’” M.Haran (“The Non-Priestly Image of the Tent of MO’ED,” pp 260-275 in *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel: An Inquiry into Biblical Cult Phenomena and the Historical Setting of the Priestly School*, M. Haran [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985] 267) states: “In fact, the non-priestly ‘*ohel mo’ed*’ simply reproduces, in miniature of course, the basic features of the divine revelation on Mount Sinai.” O.Keel (*Symbolism*, 129-34) discusses the gradations of holiness related to tabernacle/temple structure. Cf. R.E. Clements, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965) chs. 2, 5 (17-27, 63-78); M. Fishbane, “The ‘Eden’ Motif,” *Biblical Texts and Texture*, 114. The term “portable Sinai” is utilized by various commentators, such as, e.g., T.E. Fretheim (*Exodus*, 274), N.M. Sarna (*Exodus*, 237); P. Enns, *Exodus*, 493.

- (3) the glory-cloud envelops both;
- (4) the two tablets derived from Sinai's summit are placed in the tabernacle's parallel holy of holies;
- (5) mediation of the divine Presence is via sacrifice.

To flesh out some of these points now, Rodriguez offers a helpful summary of (1) some of the architectural similarities between Sinai and the tabernacle, followed by his illustration:³³¹

The similarity of arrangement here [Sinai] with that of the subsequent tabernacle is striking. The fence around the mountain, with an altar at the foot of the mountain, would correspond to the court of the sanctuary with its altar of burnt offering; the limited group of people who could go up to a certain point on the mountain would correspond to the priests of the sanctuary, who could enter into the first apartment or "holy place"; and the fact that only Moses could go up to the very presence of Yahweh would correspond to the activity of the high priest, who alone could enter into the presence of Yahweh in the inner apartment of the sanctuary, or "most holy place."



MOUNT SINAI AND THE TABERNACLE
(Sketch by Angel Manuel Rodríguez)

The Torah, further, brings out the (2) parallel function between mountain and tabernacle as the locus of divine speech (מִן־הָהָר *min-hāhār* // מֵאֵהֶל *mē'ōhel*), so that chs. 19-40 may be said to be a story "dedicated to the divine movement from mountain to tent":³³²

³³¹ A.M. Rodriguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," 132-34. Cf. N.M. Sarna's synopsis of parallels in *Exodus*, 105.

וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן־הָהָר לֵאמֹר (Exod 19.3)
And YHWH called to him from the Mountain, saying...

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר: (Lev 1.1)
And YHWH called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...

Knohl highlights the significance of the tabernacle as a locus of revelation:

Prior to the construction of the tabernacle, God said to Moses, “There I will meet with you, and I will impart to you—from above the cover, from between the two cherubim that are on top of the Ark of the Pact—all that I will command you concerning the Israelite people” (Exod 25.22). After it was set up, we read, “When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he would hear the voice addressing him from above the cover that was on top of the Ark of the Pact between the two cherubim: thus He spoke to him” (Num 7.89). God, who is seen above the cover (כַּפֹּרֶת), meets Moses there and commands the children of Israel.³³³

Continuing, Weinfeld provides evidence that (3) the building of the tabernacle is stylistically paralleled to Mount Sinai, specifically with reference to the glory cloud—an idea, he notes, is found already in Nachmanides:³³⁴

Exodus 24.15-16	Exodus 40.34-Lev 1.1
When Moses had ascended the mountain, the cloud covered (וַיִּכַס הָעָנָן) the mountain. The Presence of YHWH (קְבוֹד־יְהוָה) abode on Mount Sinai and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses (אֶל־מֹשֶׁה) from the midst of the cloud.	...the cloud covered (וַיִּכַס הָעָנָן) the Tent of Meeting, and the Presence of YHWH (קְבוֹד־יְהוָה) filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter because the cloud had settled upon it (cf. 1 Kgs. 8.10-11). YHWH called to Moses (וַיִּקְרָא אֶל־מֹשֶׁה) ... from the Tent of Meeting.

Cassuto had already noted the poetic parallelism of 40.34 is entirely similar to 24.15-16:³³⁵

³³² Cf. M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 22. A.C. Leder (“The Coherence of Exodus,” 268) notes how whereas from Sinai, Israel receives the covenant binding them to YHWH, along with the תְּכֵנִיחַ, from the tabernacle, Israel “receives the holiness instructions that permit life in God’s consuming fire presence.”

³³³ I. Knohl, “Two Aspects of the ‘Tent of Meeting,’” pp 73-79 in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, M. Cogan, et. al., eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 73; T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 277. Knohl posits that while the priestly stratum depicts the Tent primarily in terms of the divine Presence, the Torah yet preserves fragments which reflect the Tent of Meeting *merely* as the site of prophetic revelation. However, given the Cosmic Mountain ideology underpinning the conceptual framework of the Tabernacle, these two aspects, far from demanding variant traditions with a “profound theoretical and conceptual gap” (74), are seen rather as inseparable—even as the divine Presence/sanctity and revelation are correlative in the Sinai tradition. Admittedly, the tension between the Tent at the heart of the camp versus outside the camp remains.

³³⁴ M. Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord,” 504-05: “This identification is confirmed in our opinion by a comparison of Lev 1.1 to Lev 7.38. Many critics have paid attention to the apparent contradiction which is said to exist between these two passages. According to Lev 1.1, the laws of sacrifices were proclaimed in the Tent of Meeting, whereas according to Lev 7.38 these were proclaimed on Mt. Sinai. In our view there is no contradiction here, since there is an identity between Mt. Sinai and the Tent of Meeting: the revelation on the mountain and the revelation in the Tent of Meeting are one and the same. The sanctuary of God on earth is patterned after the sanctuary of God in heaven which was shown to Moses on the Mount.” See also J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 500; M. Oliva, “Interpretación teológica del culto en la perícopa del Sinaí de la Historia Sacerdotal,” *Bib* 49 (1968) 345-54; V.P. Hamilton, “שָׁכָן (*šākan*) dwell, tabernacle,” in *TWOT* 2:926.

³³⁵ U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 484.

And the cloud covered the tent of meeting,
and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle (40.34)

And the cloud covered the mountain;
and the glory of YHWH dwelt upon Mount Sinai (24.15-16)

Briefly, with reference to (4) the tables of the Law, we simply point out that the places of their origin (Sinai's summit) and keeping (holy of holies) correspond to each other typologically.

Finally, another parallel between Sinai and the tabernacle cultus is found in how the problem of the divine Presence amidst a sinful people is remedied—namely, by sacrifice:

The divine Presence in the midst of Israel necessitated sacrifice. This is implied in the connection between the end of Exodus, where the glory fills the 'tent of meeting' (Exod 40.34-35), and the opening verse of Leviticus where YHWH calls Moses to give him instruction regarding sacrifice. Leviticus 9 records the occasion when the entire worship system commenced operation. The essence of the ceremony is summarized in Lev 9.22-24. All elements of Exod 24.1-11 are repeated: (1) YHWH appears to the people (the central benefit of the covenant), (2) the priests make sacrifice and peace offerings (a communal meal would follow that celebrates covenant fellowship), and (3) Aaron speaks a word of blessing to the people (implying benefits of the covenant, perhaps similar in content to the blessings defined in Lev 26.4-13). The Levitical sacrifices functioned to maintain and celebrate covenant relationship, sanctifying the nation in service of the holy God in her midst.³³⁶

³³⁶ J.W. Hilber, "Theology of Worship in Exodus 24," 187. D. Janzen ("Priestly Sacrifice in the Hebrew Bible: A Summary of Recent Scholarship and a Narrative Reading," *Religion Compass* 2.1 [2008] 38-52) summarizes Milgrom's position on sacrifices as necessitated by the holiness of God's Presence: "When we read P's account of tabernacle and sacrifices in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, it becomes clear that God and the sanctuary are associated with the holy—the interior of the sanctuary, in which P sees God's presence, is referred to as 'most holy,' while the priests and the other parts of the sanctuary are 'holy'—and this designation contrasts with the rest of Israel, who belong to the common. God and all things and priests associated with the holy must be in a state of purity.... The realm of the holy in the sanctuary will only tolerate a finite amount of impurity before God will depart, and therefore the sacrifices are necessary to purify it" (41). Janzen himself sees the necessity of sacrifice not as a response to the threat of God's departure, but to the threat of God's making a sacrifice out of Israel through famine, plague, and warfare (49). D.J.A. Clines ("A World Established on Water (Psalm 24): Reader-Response, Deconstructio and Bespoke Interpretation," pp 172-86 in *Interested Parties: The Ideology of Writers and Readers of the Hebrew Bible* [JSOTSup 205; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) appears to miss the point, then, when he posits the entrance liturgy as an indication of the threat to holiness/ holy space by the unclean, rather than of the threat to the unclean by the Presence of the holy God: "My question to myself, as a reader checking all the time on my responses to texts, is: Can I tolerate a notion of holiness that sees it as contaminatable? If the world contains relatively small pockets of holiness, like a hill of the Lord or a temple, surrounded by vast areas of unholiness, like (presumably) everywhere else, and if the unholy has the power to contaminate the holy but the holy does not have the power to infect the unholy, what future, I ask myself, is there for the holy? The holy is rather under threat, is it not, if it has to be protected from the unholy by the exclusion of unrighteous people from visiting the sanctuary. For if impure people are supposed to be kept out of the shrine, or keep themselves out, in order to protect its holiness, what happens if impure people are inadvertently allowed in? Does the holy thereby become unholy?" (3). T.E. Fretheim's comments on Exod 19.20-25 serve as an adequate response: "The issue is not a concern for God, as if the divine transcendence or sovereignty would be compromised or violated. The concern is explicitly for the sake of the people, to preserve them alive....[T]oo direct a divine presence would annul human existence, as a flame kills a butterfly" (*Exodus*, 218). So, too, B.S. Childs's comments on these verses form a fitting description of Cline's

Because of the cultic remedy for sin, “the fire that dwells in their midst” does not consume Israel (40.34-38; cf. 3.3, 24.17).³³⁷

In conclusion, there appears to be a deliberate narrational catechesis regarding the transition from Sinai to the tabernacle cultus, so that one may understand with Childs that what happened at Sinai “is continued in the tabernacle.”³³⁸ This however amounts to a fundamental understatement unless one first views Sinai as the culminating cosmic mountain, the fulfillment of the cosmogonic pattern: through the Sea (Exod 14) → to Mount Sinai (Exod 19) → for worship (Exod 24), and the summit from which the divine blueprint for the tabernacle, as with the ark of Noah, is revealed. In sum, when the glory cloud transitions from Sinai to the tabernacle holy of holies, what is continued in the tabernacle includes Sinai’s summation of creation (Gen 1-3) and deliverance (Gen 6-9).

E. The Tabernacle and the Priesthood

One is not finished with the tabernacle cultus, however, apart from considering its personnel, the priesthood.³³⁹ The role of the priesthood must be understood in light of the overarching conceptual pattern of the tabernacle as a renewed cosmos.³⁴⁰ Fletcher-Louis fills in a key piece

article: “This picture is a total misunderstanding. Rather, the warning is given for the sake of the people, who have no experience as yet of the dimensions of divine holiness, and lest warned will destroy themselves” (*Exodus*, 370).

³³⁷ A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 260. Leder again emphasizes here the point that if read in isolation from Genesis, Exodus provides no hint that the Lord’s dwelling amidst Israel is part of the narrative agenda (260 fn 28).

³³⁸ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 540. Cf. *ibid.*, *Old Testament Theology in Canonical Context*, 163. R.E. Clements similarly writes that the Sinai theophany is “to be repeated in Israel’s cultic life” via the Tabernacle (*God and Temple*, 22). D. Gowan states that is “is significant that the priestly tradition clearly intends to transfer to the tabernacle what the older traditions said about God’s presence on Mount Sinai” (*Theology in Exodus*, 185). Cf. also N.M. Sarna (*Exploring Exodus*, 190-91, 203) who speaks of the Tabernacle “extending” the Sinai experience, and U. Cassuto, *Exodus*, 319.

³³⁹ R. de Vaux, thus, appropriately states: “it is impossible to imagine a sanctuary without any priest to look after it” (*Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, J. McHugh, trans. [1961; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997] 348). M. Barker states: “one of the keys to any understanding of the temple cult is the realization that the rituals and personnel were also thought to be the visible manifestation of the heavenly reality” (*The Gate of Heaven*, 17). Cf. C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator,” 188.

³⁴⁰ Thus J.A. Davies (*A Royal Priesthood*, 150) asks the key questions: “If the tabernacle had an overarching conceptual rationale along the lines sketched above, what role did the person of the priest play in that rationale?”

when he notes that “the high priest was also believed to be the true or second Adam. This idea is probably present already in Ezekiel 28.12-16 and is otherwise clearly attested in Sirach 49.16-50.1 (Hebrew text).”³⁴¹ He notes further that “the Adamic identity of Aaron is fundamental to the theology of P,” with the priest/new Adam “doing what Adam failed to do in the temple-as-restored-Eden.”³⁴² That Adam was understood in priestly terms, even as a high priest, is evident from early sources of interpretation.³⁴³ In his *Legends of the Jews*, for example, Ginzberg notes: “On the sixth, the last day of creation, man had been created in the image of God to glorify his creator, and likewise was the high priest anointed to minister in the tabernacle before his Lord and creator.”³⁴⁴ It may even be precisely because he is an Adam-figure that the priest’s sin propagated guilt among the entire people (Lev 4.3).³⁴⁵ Even the terms for the priestly garments, כבוד (“glory”) and תפארה (“honor”), forming an *inclusio* around the account of the vestments in Exod 28, are used of the glory theophany of YHWH, demonstrating that “the priest was appropriately attired to enter a renewed cosmos and stand in the presence of the divine resident

What impression was conveyed to the Israelite community as day by day they saw their priests, dressed in their finery, enter God’s house to attend upon him and to enjoy his company in the surroundings of an ideal world?” See also his comments on 164-65.

³⁴¹ C.H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest,” 96; *idem.*, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 42; Leiden: Brill, 2002) chs 3, 7 and 11. Cf. also M. Barker, “The High Priest and the Worship of Jesus,” pp 93-111 in *The Jewish Roots of the Worship of Jesus*, C.C. Newman, *et. al.*, eds. (JSJSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1999). For the traditional correlation between the vision of Moses in the Sinai pericope and Ezek 1, see L. Teugels, “Did Moses See the Chariot? The Link Between Exod 19-20 and Ezek 1 in Early Jewish Interpretation,” pp 595-602 in *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction-Reception-Interpretation*, M. Vervenne, ed. (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996).

³⁴² C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part I,” *JSHJ* 4.2 (2006) 159 and fn 8. Further: “In his *Biblical Antiquities* 26.6 Pseudo-Philo faithfully spells out the narrative logic of the intratextuality between Gen 2-3 and the vision of Aaron in the restored Eden of the Sinaitic Tabernacle. It is the priesthood that discerns between good and evil (Lev 27.12) as Adam and Even were supposed to do. The Levites guard and keep the sanctuary as Adam was called to (Gen 2.15; Num 3.8, 38). The fecundity of Eden is restored at the sanctuary, and so on” (159 fn 10).

³⁴³ J. Marcus, “Son of Man as Son of Adam, Part II: Exegesis,” *RB* 110 (2003) 374 and fn 14.

³⁴⁴ L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: JPS, 1911) 150.

³⁴⁵ Cf. R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 73. This is also an aspect of their representing the people before YHWH (cf. 86f).

of this cosmic temple.”³⁴⁶ Thus the priest in the representation or *drama* of the cultus, dressed in such glorious raiment, portrayed humanity in its newly created purity, no longer separated from the divine Presence through the rebellion and expulsion recounted in Genesis 3, but able—as the pre-eminent “holy” person—to ascend the mount, to enter the holy of holies.³⁴⁷ It is important to see, further, that the priests inherited Moses’ role, discussed earlier, as mediator:

One might picture priests as mediating an ascending movement toward God in their installation rite of passage and their holy and clean life-styles and a concurrent descending movement of oracular messages from God, authoritative declarations, trustworthy torah, and effective blessings in Yahweh’s name. The mediating and revelatory role of the priest, the one who by virtue of his office was “near” Yahweh (Ezek 42.13; 43.19; compare Exod 19.22), is well expressed in a popular saying about priests that has God declare: “Through those near me I will make myself holy, and before the entire people I will glorify myself” (Lev 10.3).³⁴⁸

Indeed, as Fletcher-Louis remarks, in “the Pentateuch, Aaron, the chief priest, is the messiah.”³⁴⁹

The essence, then, of the priestly role was access to the Presence, as evident by the vocabulary used to describe such movement: קרב, נגש, עמד, along with phrases in relation to YHWH that utilize the prepositional form לפני, and with priests being defined as: הגושים אל-יהוה (“the ones who draw near to YHWH,” Exod 19.22), קרובים ליהוה (“those who approach YHWH,” Ezek 42.13;

³⁴⁶ J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 158. For “glory” ascribed to YHWH, see Exod 24.16-17; Isa 4.5; Ps 57.6 [5]; for “honor,” see Isa 46.13, 63.15; Pss 71.8; 96.6; I Chron 29.11. Fletcher-Louis, further, posits five lines of reasoning to argue that “within the cult at least, the high priest takes on some of God’s identity in the victory over the forces of chaos,” an argument that, if valid, strengthens the *Chaoskampf* parallel between creation and cult (C. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator,” 186-92). Cf. M. Carden, “Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative: Rebellious Sons, Scapegoats and Boy Substitutes,” *The Bible and Critical Theory* 5.1 (2009) 04.5.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 158-59, 166. Davies further notes: “The priesthood and tabernacle constitute a constant reminder of the goal and prospect of holiness and acceptability to God. In the cult the people have a visible representation of what it would mean were they all to live in priestly holiness. Similarly, the glory and honour which characterize the Aaronic priests serve as a visible reminder of the glory and honour to which God has called the whole people (Deut 26.19; Isa 17.3; 62.2; Jer 13.11)” (168). NOTE: Because, among other things, the high priest represented the people to God, it is important to see the nation of Israel, God’s son (cf. Exod 4.22), as symbolizing a new Adam as well. C. Dohmen notes how via the covenantal agreement Israel in effect becomes a new entity, a cultic community (*Exodus* 19-40, 60f). J.H. Hayes, as one example of the general consensus, mentions the high priest “represented the community” in his “Atonement in the Book of Leviticus,” *Int* 52 (1998) 8. S.W. Hahn writes: “Israel is to be corporately what Adam was created to be individually—the firstborn of a new humanity, a liturgical people that will dwell with God in a relationship of filial obedience and worship. ...As Israel is given an “Adamic” vocation, it experiences an Adamic fall from grace” (“Worship in the Word,” 111). Cf. J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 202.

³⁴⁸ R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 52.

³⁴⁹ C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah,” 161.

cf. 43.19; Lev 10.3).³⁵⁰ Thus, while uncertainty remains concerning the original meaning of the word translated “priest,” the suggestion, widely accepted by scholars, that כֹּהֵן *kōhēn* derives from the verb כָּוַן (“to stand”), so that the priest is defined as one who stands before the divine Presence, appears plausible.³⁵¹ This is, of course, especially the case with the high priest whose “special status emerges from the entire structure of the priestly cult according to which only the High Priest may minister inside the tent of meeting, before the ark, whereas ordinary priests may officiate only outside the tent,”³⁵² that is, his special status emerges from his being the sole ascender to the (typological) Mount’s summit, the “who” in the question: “Who may ascend the mount of YHWH?” The focus of Israel’s cultic calendar was upon entering the holy of holies, after elaborate preparations (Lev 16.2-17), one day out of the year, the Day of Atonement, a privilege granted the high priest alone³⁵³—his “most critical role.”³⁵⁴ Indeed, this annual ritual of penetrating into the divine Presence may be considered the archetypal priestly act,³⁵⁵ whereupon Adam-like he fulfills the cosmogonic pattern:

Once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, Adam’s eastward expulsion from the Garden is reversed when the high priest travels west past the consuming fire of the sacrifice and the purifying water of the laver, through the veil woven with images of cherubim. Thus, he returns to the original point of creation, where he pours out the atoning blood of the sacrifice, reestablishing the covenant relationship with God.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 162.

³⁵¹ Cf. F.B. Holbrook, “The Israelite Sanctuary,” pp 3-36 in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, F.B. Holbrook, ed. (Silver Spring, MD: BRI, 1989) 20-21; R. Abba, “Priests and Levites,” *IDB* (1962) 3:877; J.J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt* (Grand Rapids: BMH Books, 1971) 270-71; R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 346.

³⁵² B.A. Levine, “Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch,” 311. For the emphasis on Aaron particularly throughout the prescriptive section, chs. 28 and 29, his name mentioned some 16 times in ch. 28 alone, see C. Meyers, “Incense Altar and Lamp Oil in the Tabernacle Texts,” pp 13-21 in *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible, and Religion in Honor of R.E. Friedman on his Sixtieth Birthday*, S. Dolansky, ed. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008).

³⁵³ J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 162. For the emphasis of on the Day of Atonement in the Priestly Writing, cf. R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 127ff. Cf. M. Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004) 10; 53-73. See also Barker’s “Atonement: The Rite of Healing,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49.1 (1996) 1-20.

³⁵⁴ R.D. Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest*, 13. Nelson also notes that the Urim and Thummim became obsolete except for their use on the Day of Atonement, for the selection of goats (42).

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁵⁶ D. Parry, “Garden of Eden,” 135. S.W. Hahn notes that “the goal of the worship and Law of Israel becomes that of atonement” (“Worship in the Word,” 112). M. Barker also suggests that to pass through the veil into the Holy of holies was to pass into the first day of creation—cf. “Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the

Significantly, then, in the consecration of the priesthood, only Aaron is anointed (29.7).

“Priestly unction was a rite of passage to a new status and effected passage from the outer, profane world to the sanctity of the tabernacle precinct.”³⁵⁷ The tabernacle, immediately dominating the literary landscape and encircled by the tribes of Israel, constituted sacred space, guarded by the Levites so that anyone who did not belong to the priestly families and who attempted entrance was subject to the death penalty: “any outsider who encroaches shall be put to the death” (Num 3.10, 38).³⁵⁸ Only those ordained may draw near to God (Num 16.5, 9, 10; 17.5; Lev 21.17).³⁵⁹ Significant to the gate liturgy theme already developed with reference to Moses and Mount Sinai, the presentation of the ordination of Aaron and his sons in Leviticus 8-9 “is focused spatially on the door of the tent of meeting (Lev 8.3, 33). Indeed, the entire seven day period of the priests’ ordination is a time when Aaron and his sons are to remain at the door of the tent.”³⁶⁰ The weight of this annual drama, and thus of the gate liturgy itself, is manifest by its literary centrality: Leviticus is the center of the Torah,³⁶¹ and the Day of Atonement is the central

Apocalypses” (Presidential address to the Society for Old Testament Study; published in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 51.1 [1998]) accessed at: www.jbburnett.com/resources/barker/barker_beyond%20the%20veil.pdf.

³⁵⁷ Cf. C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 246. Meyers further notes that the “[s]ymbolic unction under divine auspices was such an important part of accession to office that the term ‘anointed one’ (*māšīah*) is found in the Hebrew Bible as a designation for divinely appointed officials such as kings, prophets, and even patriarchs and foreign kings; eventually it refers to an eschatological figure or ‘messiah’” (246). Cf. R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, II, 348; D. Fleming, “The Biblical Tradition of Anointing Priests,” *JBL* 117.3 (1998) 401-14; S. Niditch, *The Symbolic Vision in Biblical Tradition* (HSM, 30; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980) 110; J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 160-61. D.W. Parry (“Ritual Anointing with Olive Oil in Ancient Israelite Religion,” pp 262-89 in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob* 5, S. Ricks, J. Welch, eds. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994]) refers to this anointing as a “gesture of approach,” linking it with the entrance liturgies of Pss 15, 24, and Isa 33.14-17 (“‘Who Shall Ascend into the Mountain of the Lord?’: Three Biblical Temple Entrance Hymns,” pp 729-42 in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, D.W. Parry, et. al., eds. [Provo: FARMS, 2002]). Thus the long-awaited “Anointed One” might well be defined by his “entrance” work (Cf. Heb 10.19-22; 12.22-24).

³⁵⁸ I. Knohl, “Two Aspects of the ‘Tent of Meeting,’” 73.

³⁵⁹ C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” *JSHJ* 5.1 (2007) 78. M. Barker notes well: “The mediators who passed between the two worlds were vital to the cult” (*Gate of Heaven*, 62).

³⁶⁰ F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 49.

³⁶¹ Cf., e.g., D.L. Christensen, “The Pentateuchal Principle within the Canonical Process,” *JETS* 39.4 (1996) 537-48 (539). M. Carden highlights the importance of the Day of Atonement in other portions of the Hebrew Bible as well, noting, e.g., the sacral quality “of 1 & 2 Samuel highlights even more the centrality of the Day of Atonement and atonement rituals for biblical religion(s)” (“Atonement Patterns in Biblical Narrative,” 04.11).

theme of Leviticus,³⁶² with its own center, chapter 16, highlighting the Day of Atonement chiastically:³⁶³

- “And YHWH said to Moses...”
- A. Aaron should not go into Holy of holies any time he wishes (16.2)
 - B. Aaron’s sacrificial victims, special vestment (16.3-4)
 - C. Sacrificial victims provide by people (16.5)
 - D. Aaron’s bull, goat for sin-offering, goat for Azazel (16.6-10)
 - E. Aaron sacrifices bull (16.11-14)
 - F. Goat sacrificed as sin-offering (16.15)
- A. Genesis
- B. Exodus
- X. Leviticus – ch. 16 →
- B.’ Numbers
- A.’ Deuteronomy
- E.’ Aaron’s closing activities (16.23-25)
- D.’ Goat for Azazel, Aaron’s bull, goat for sin-offering (16.26-28)
- C.’ People rest and humble themselves (16.29-31)
- B.’ Anointed priest officiates wearing special garments (16.32-33)
- A.’ Anointed priest makes atonement once a year (16.34)
- “As YHWH commanded Moses...”

In the drama of liturgy, the Day of Atonement was the “most intimate of the representations of access” to the divine Presence.³⁶⁴ Indeed, the importance of this day to the theology of the cult cannot be overestimated:

The goal of the Torah is holiness, which can be symbolically achieved in the cult. This occurs properly through atonement. The act of dedication to God, by which the distance from what is holy is symbolically bridged by the substitutionary offering of blood, is so central for the cult of the Priestly Document, that not only is the great day of atonement the highest holy day, but also every sacrifice takes on the nature of atonement, for it is only atonement, not offering a gift, that can express the meaning of the cult.³⁶⁵

³⁶² M. Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 231-34.

³⁶³ Cf. A.M. Rodriguez, “Leviticus 16: Its Literary Structure,” *AUSS* 34.2 (1996) 269-86 (283). The chiasm presented varies slightly from that of Rodriguez. For Lev 19 as the ring center, see M. Douglas, “Poetic Structure in Leviticus,” pp 239-56 in *Pomegranates & Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, D.P. Wright, D.N. Fredman, A. Hurvitz, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1995).

³⁶⁴ J.A. Davies, *A Royal Priesthood*, 162. Ultimately, then, the gate liturgy is via substitutionary atonement, the mythic pattern of (substitutionary) death and rebirth being at the heart of sacrificial system of Israel’s cultus. Cf. “Rebirth,” pp 696-97 in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Ryken, Wilhoit, Longman III, eds. (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998) 697. Every sacrifice had atonement at its heart, both pointing toward and deriving significance from the high Day of Atonement. This has implications for the high priest’s role as a “continuing Moses,” for as G. von Rad (*Old Testament Theology* I, D.M.G. Stalker, trans. [New York: Harper & Row, 1962] 295) and D.T. Olson (*Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* [Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1994]) have observed, Moses is portrayed somewhat as a sacrificial substitute on Israel’s behalf.

³⁶⁵ H. Gese, *Essays on Biblical Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1981) 74.

In the cultic worldview, “the God-intended humanity of Genesis 1 is thus recapitulated, and sacramentally reconstituted, in Israel’s priesthood, in the temple-as-microcosm.”³⁶⁶

F. To Dwell in the Divine Presence

By way of summation, we turn now to consider the biblical-theological goal and denouement of the narrative arc from Genesis 1-3 to Exodus 40, as it may be surmised by the descent of the glory cloud upon the tabernacle. Justly does Rodriguez mark Exod 25.8 as a key text, the divine command forming a link between the first twenty-four chapters of Exodus and the final fifteen: “And let them make me [YHWH] a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.”³⁶⁷ The tabernacle cultus perpetuates the very purpose and goal of the exodus deliverance, first fulfilled at the foot of Sinai: worship, variously described as “sacrifice”/זבח (Ex 3.18; 5.3; 8.27-29; 10.25); “celebrate a festival”/חגג (Ex 5.1; 8.20; 10.9); “serve,” “worship”/עבד (3.12; 4.23; 7.16; 8.1, 20; 9.1, 13; 10.3, 7, 8, 11, 24, 26; 12.31).³⁶⁸ Indeed, this was the sign given Moses: “When you have brought forth the people from Egypt you [pl.] will worship God upon this mountain” (3.12). As the archetype of the tabernacle,³⁶⁹ Mount Sinai—the “eschatological” experience of being delivered through the waters and brought to the mountain of God for worship—would thus be prolonged and maintained via the tabernacle cultus.³⁷⁰ As cosmic mountain, furthermore, Sinai’s summit corresponds to Eden, paradisiacal features and symbolism also being subsumed by the tabernacle. The key link here is that the תִּבְנִיָּה is “a model of the cosmic Tabernacle of Yahweh,” with “the earthly shrine as a microcosm of the cosmic shrine.”³⁷¹ Thus returning to Exod 25.8,

³⁶⁶ C. Fletcher-Louis, “Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2,” 76.

³⁶⁷ A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 128.

³⁶⁸ This is recognized in most commentaries. E. Carpenter sums up the position in stating: “The goal of Israel’s journey into the desert in chs. 5-17 was to worship Yahweh” (“Exodus 18,” 101-02 and fn 16).

³⁶⁹ J. Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology* 1 (Los Angeles: U of CA Press, 1970) 44-46. P. Enns, among other commentators, also posits Mount Sinai as the “pattern” for the Tabernacle (*Exodus*, 488).

³⁷⁰ A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 134.

³⁷¹ F.M. Cross, Jr., “The Priestly Tabernacle in the Light of Recent Research,” 93-94.

we find the divine intention clearly expressed as “to dwell/ tabernacle” (שכן)³⁷² amidst his people. It is a sound suggestion, then, that *the cultic mediation of the Presence of YHWH via the tabernacle has been in view in the Torah’s narrative ever since that Presence was lost with the exile out of Paradise in Gen 1-3, informing the tabernacle symbolism*³⁷³ found therein.

The central plot of the story of Exod 19-40 being “dedicated to the divine movement from mountain to tent,”³⁷⁴ the book of Exodus thus ends with a climax that may serve as something of a bookend with the creation account in as much as it describes a completed temple-building project sanctified by the presence of YHWH (40.34-35):

וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן אֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן:
וְלֹא-יָכֹל מֹשֶׁה לָּבוֹא אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד כִּי-שָׁכַן עָלָיו הָעָנָן וַיִּכְבֹּד יְהוָה מְלֵא אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן:

Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle.

The cloud and Presence of glory,³⁷⁵ that is, “the visible manifestation of the divine Presence, not a substitute for it,”³⁷⁶ having rested atop Mount Sinai now moves upon the tabernacle, the building project that is both a proclamation of YHWH’s cosmic rule and something of an “incarnation” of the triumphant King amidst his vassals.³⁷⁷ As Buber has it, the כְּבוֹד is that

³⁷² Cf. F.M. Cross, Jr., “The Tabernacle,” 64-66; A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 129-30.

³⁷³ Cf. G. Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” pp 399-404 in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood: Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11*, R.S. Hess, D.T. Tsumura, eds. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994). M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture: A Literary Reading of Selected Texts* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998) 13: “The new beginning signified by the creation of the world is concluded by a symbolic renewal of that creation when the creator is built a dwelling on earth by His creatures. Divine lordship thus becomes an event on earth, and is not simply restricted to a primordial era or cosmic realm. At the same time, this ancient mythic structure, and the verbal correspondences already noted between Genesis 2.1-3 and Exodus 39-40, serve severally to valorize the Israelite institution of a priestly tabernacle by placing it within an order of signification whose very origin is the beginning of the world.”

³⁷⁴ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 22. This connection, he suggests, is connected with the role of the human actors who may not ascend the mountain, making the divine descent to the Tabernacle necessary (99).

³⁷⁵ For the cloud of Glory symbolizing the divine Presence, cf. J. Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 272-73.

³⁷⁶ G. Davies, “The Theology of Exodus,” 141 (emphasis original). He further supports this understanding in fn 12 of the same page, noting that the LXX renders the phrase *w’sākanif b’tōkām* in 25.8 with καὶ ὁφθήσομαι ἐν ὑμῖν.

³⁷⁷ Cf. A.C. Leder, “The Coherence of Exodus,” 268.

“fiery ‘weight’ or ‘majesty’ of God radiating from the invisible, which now ‘fills’ again and again the ‘dwelling’ of the tent (40.34), just as it had ‘taken dwelling’ upon the mount (24.16).”³⁷⁸ In this great gesture, the God of the Patriarchs, *El Shaddai*, becomes the God of the sons of Israel, of the nation of Israel, to be worshiped corporately through the tabernacle cultus alone.³⁷⁹ The story of chs 19-40 as a whole, framed by 19.3 and Lev 1.1, “presents how the locus of theophany was changed from mountain to tabernacle.”³⁸⁰ This transference and transformation, it may be argued, moves literarily via three steps: (1) establishing the God of creation as the God of the Patriarchs through the narratives of Genesis; (2) establishing the God of the Patriarchs as the God who calls Moses (Exod 3.6, YHWH declares: “I am *the God of your father*—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”; Ex 15.2, Moses sings: “This is my God—I will praise him/ *the God of my father*—I will exalt him”);³⁸¹ (3) the glory cloud’s moving from the cosmic mountain (religion of the Patriarchs) to the tabernacle (cultus of

³⁷⁸ M. Buber, “Holy Event (Exodus 19-27),” 51.

³⁷⁹ For a similar succession of the names for the deity, cf. B.W. Anderson, *Contours of Old Testament Theology*, 86. The “alone” here derives from our understanding of the function and role of Exod 32 set in the midst of Tabernacle instruction and construction. Indeed, A. Phillips (“A Fresh Look at the Sinai Pericope: Part 1,” 51) brings out the parallels between the covenant ratification of Exod 24 and the covenant breaking of Exod 32. At the core of the covenant matrix in both texts, moreover, is the issue of worship. F. Polak thus refers to the Golden Calf episode as “a reversion of the Sinai theophany” (“Theophany and Mediator,” 141). The verb “to make” (עשה), so prominent for the making of the Tabernacle, occurs over a dozen times in the Golden Calf episode, portraying it as anti-sanctuary activity (T. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 280). Further, the making, breaking, and remaking of the covenant in Exod 19-34 corresponds with the overall pattern of Genesis 1-11, old creation, destruction, new beginning (J. Blenkinsopp, “Structure and Meaning,” 111; T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 272), and even with the pattern discernible in the specific Creation and Deluge narratives: through the waters to the mountain for worship, sin/Fall, restoration. The chiasmic literary structure of the Golden Calf narrative itself centers on v 26a where Moses, standing at the gate of the camp, says: מִי לַיהוָה אֵלַי / “Whoever is for YHWH, come to me!” (R.E. Hendrix, “A Literary Structural Analysis of the Golden-Calf Episode in Exodus 32.1-33.6,” *AUSS* 28.3 [1990] 211-17). For a critical analysis of Exod 32-34, cf. R.W.L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34* (JSOTSup 22; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).

³⁸⁰ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 62.

³⁸¹ P.D. Miller, e.g., considers this the oldest attestation identifying YHWH with the God of the fathers (*The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* [HSM 5; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973] 114). Cf. P. Enns, *Exodus*, 297-98. NOTE: Moses is thus portrayed as the “last Patriarch,” YHWH meeting him at the entrance of his own (Moses’) tent (Exod 33.7-11; cf. Gen 18.1; A. Cooper and B.R. Goldstein, “At the Entrance to the Tent: More Cultic Resonances in Biblical Narrative,” *JBL* 116.2 [1997] 201-15). But, with the movement of the Glory cloud to the Tabernacle, worship shifts from family clan to national cultus.

Israel).³⁸² That there appears to be deliberate narrative intention to demonstrate continuity between the cosmic mountain religion of the forefathers and the tabernacle/temple cultus of the original audience seems beyond question—and our thesis, that the creation, deluge, and exodus narratives “pre-figure” the tabernacle cultus, thereby follows as well.

After being tutored in Moses’ ability to ascend, the utterly unexpected statement in 40.35 that he is “not able (לֹא יָכֹל)...to enter (לְבוֹא)” is indeed remarkable. In Exod 33.20, YHWH had prohibited Moses from entering his Presence too directly (“You are not able (לֹא חֹזֵק) to see my face...”), so that the prohibition here would seem to imply that YHWH’s Presence via the tabernacle though mediated is nonetheless a *real* Presence not to be trifled with—the tabernacle, in other words, provides for YHWH’s immanence while safeguarding his transcendence,³⁸³ with the ritual divine Presence becoming “the highest form of religiosity.”³⁸⁴ The tabernacle thus

³⁸² This is not unlike M. Buber’s observation that while the deity remains the same from the patriarchal age to that of the Exodus tradition, it is the people (Israel as a nation) that changes. See, “Holy Event (Exodus 19-27,” pp 45-58 in *Exodus: Modern Critical Interpretations*, H. Bloom, ed. (New York: Chelsea House, 1987), originally published in *On the Bible: Eighteen Studies by Martin Buber* (New York: Schocken, 1968). Cf. also Fretheim’s theological reflection on the shift in divine abode from Mountain to Tabernacle (*Exodus*, 272-73). We recall here also the points of transition noted earlier, namely, that the vision of God in Exod 24.10-11 already begins to give way to temple imagery, and the “pattern” for the Tabernacle was revealed specifically from the summit of Sinai.

³⁸³ Cf. A.M. Rodriguez, “Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus,” 131-37. J.I. Durham (*Exodus*, 500-01), in agreement with U. Cassuto (*Exodus*, 484), is likely right in pointing out “no real discrepancy” here in Moses’ inability to enter since even in Exod 24.15-18 (as well as in 19.20) it is clear that he had to wait until Yahweh’s invitation (24.17) which, in the Tabernacle context, probably occurs in either Leviticus (either 1.1 or 9.23). However, and given the lack of *objective* discrepancy, Exod 40.35 still makes Moses’ inability to enter the Presence a matter of *literary* emphasis not found in the narrative of ch. 24, and thus crucial for interpretation. B.S. Childs (*Exodus*, 638) suggests that here Moses’ role gives way to the priestly role of Aaron (Lev 9.23). To be sure, Aaron’s “future” role has been in preparation throughout the narrative, as suggested by his singular privilege of accompanying Moses up the Mount in Exod 19.24 (P. Enns, *Exodus*, 395). However, Enns’s suggestion that Moses’ inability to enter represents “a heightening of God’s presence” is appealing (*Exodus*, 599), functioning perhaps to confirm the validity of the Tabernacle cultus (even as the fearful theophany had previously functioned to validate Moses’ mediatorial role, Exod 19.9). D.K. Stuart (*Exodus*, 792-93) suggests that Moses’ barred entry was to communicate that the Tabernacle was Yahweh’s house, not the builder’s (i.e., Moses). T.B. Dozeman provides a balanced perspective in positing that the point of emphasis lies in the danger of approaching the cultic Presence of God apart from the proper rituals and qualified priesthood (*Exodus*, 765-66). So, the point is not simply that Moses’ role gives way to the priesthood, but includes the essential shift from approaching the divine Presence upon the Cosmic Mountain to approach via the ordained cultus—that is, the Tabernacle, the text is emphasizing, is part of a “regulated” cultic complex. Cf. M.R. Hauge, who traces the narrative development of the four *visio Dei* episodes (20.18-21; 24.17; 33.8-10; 40.34-38) and sees a role reversal between Moses and the people in this final and climactic scene (*The Descent from the Mountain*, 41, 58).

³⁸⁴ M.R. Hauge, *The Descent from the Mountain*, 101.

becomes the one locus in all the earth for God's Presence to dwell, and the intensity of this glorious mystery is so powerful, Moses is not able to enter.³⁸⁵ Brisman expresses the sublimity of the account well:

Here the sense of God as *beyond* human activity is troped as the presence of God *before* human activity: Filling that Tabernacle, God prevents ("goes before" and thwarts) Moses from filling his duty. It is a happy prevention, this dedicatory vision of the presence of God....For the Priestly writer to conclude Exodus with a vision of God filling the Tabernacle, he needs to look beyond the priestly business of God's work to a vision of the Divine Presence that prevents and overwhelms the priesthood—and even Moses himself.³⁸⁶

As the cloud descends upon the tabernacle "with the deity entering his dwelling place" and filling it with the כבוד, the book's end not only forms a counterpart to the *deus absconditus* of the opening chapters of Exodus,³⁸⁷ although YHWH's "filling" (מִלֵּא) the tabernacle (40.34, 35) forms an *inclusio* with the sons of Israel "filling" (מִלֵּא) the land of Egypt (1.7),³⁸⁸ but also a bookend with the prologue to the Torah, the creation account of Genesis 1-2.3, where upon completing the cosmic temple, God enters his dwelling place in the enthronement of the Sabbath.³⁸⁹ It might even be said that the creation begun in Genesis 1 comes to fulfillment, however partial, with the establishment of the tabernacle cultus.³⁹⁰ Moreover, the re-creation

³⁸⁵ C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 283.

³⁸⁶ L. Brisman, "On the Divine Presence in Exodus," 108.

³⁸⁷ F. Polak, "Theophany and Mediator," 147. T.B. Dozeman also notes the "absence of God" in the beginning of Exodus (*Exodus*, 44).

³⁸⁸ A.C. Leder, "Reading Exodus to Learn," 20; D. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus*, 1-24.

³⁸⁹ Parallels have already been discussed above, but a brief synopsis: "At the far end of the book of Exodus the influence of Genesis, or, strictly, of the cosmic creation narrative therein, is again in evidence. As the tabernacle construction is brought to its conclusion we read, "Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished" (Ex 39.32 // Gen 2.1), and then we are told that Moses looked on all that the Israelites had done and blessed them (Ex 39.43 // Gen 1.28, 31)" (R.P. Gordon, *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions: Selected Essays in Honor of Robert P. Gordon* [SOTS; Burlington: Ashgate, 2006] 29). The enthronement emphasis may also be seen in the instructions for building the Tabernacle (ch. 25), as B.A. Levine is likely correct in seeing the order of items in relation to relative importance with the ark, as "the central object of the cult" as well as YHWH's throne, coming first ("The Descriptive Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch," *JAOS* 85.3 [1965] 307). This priority, to be sure, is organized by degree of holiness—see M. Haran, *Temples and Temple Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978; reprinted, Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1985); P.P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World* (JSOTSup 106; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992); C. Meyers, *Exodus*, 224-25. In relation to theology of Presence, the Ark "the supreme post-Sinai symbol of the Presence of Yahweh" (J.I. Durham, *Exodus*, 350). Cf. P. Enns, *Exodus*, 511.

³⁹⁰ Cf. F. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual Space, Time and Status in the Priestly Ideology* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990) 42, and Fretheim's caveat regarding Gorman's conclusion (230) that the Tabernacle cultus represents

account of the deluge is also fulfilled by the tabernacle climax of Exodus since the “arrival of the Israelites at Sinai sets in motion acts of atonement, administered by a sanctified priesthood, which will provide the antidote to the pollution, which causes the flood.”³⁹¹ The tabernacle was “raised” (הִקָּם), what’s more, on “the first day of the first month” (40.2, 17), the same day the covering was removed from the ark for Noah to gaze upon a renewed creation (Gen 8.13), that is, on New Year’s Day.³⁹² This new beginning marks the creation (בְּרֵאשִׁית Gen 1.1), deluge (בְּרֵאשִׁית Gen 8.13), and tabernacle (הִקָּם 40.17) narratives. The undercurrent of these accounts, the drama and *telos* of the biblical narrative, particularly as it culminates in the tabernacle story, is the gaining of life in the Presence of the Creator:

[T]he tent located in the heart of the camp was first and foremost a place where the Glory of God was constantly present. God appeared in the cloud above the cherub covering that rested on the ark of the Pact: “for I appear in the cloud over the cover” (Lev 16.2). Consequently, the Tent of Meeting was called a tabernacle מִשְׁכָּן (from the root שָׁכַן ‘to dwell’), because it was the fixed dwelling place of the Divine Glory. The constant presence of the Glory in the Tent is expressed in the cult of the fixed daily offering (תָּמִיד), in whose framework the priests offered the daily burnt offering, burned the incense, lit the eternal light, and arranged the showbread on the table. Only the perpetual presence of God’s glory within the Tent of Meeting can explain the complex of acts performed in the daily worship.³⁹³

The period from the expulsion from Paradise until Sinai had been marked by God’s dealings with humanity “from afar.”³⁹⁴ Now, so the message of the tabernacle narrative, the divine Presence is “not merely on an ethereal, cosmic plane” (lost via the expulsion), but is “historically present to Israel.”³⁹⁵ The Presence of YHWH among his people, then, is a—perhaps, *the*—major

creation’s being “fully” finished (“Reclamation of Creation,” 364-65 fn 26). N.M. Sarna makes the interesting correlation with Gen 1.2 when he closes his commentary by stating: “Israel is assured that, day and night, the Divine Spirit hovers it, guiding and controlling its destiny” (*Exodus*, 237).

³⁹¹ T.B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, 439.

³⁹² Commonly recognized by scholars. See A.C. Leder, “Reading Exodus to Learn,” 26.

³⁹³ I. Knohl, “Two Aspects of the ‘Tent of Meeting,’” 73. Further, “The priestly tradition emphasizes the immanence of God. Religious certainty is attained by the fixed presence of God within Israel. The purpose of the complex cultic system practiced within the Tent of Meeting is to facilitate God’s continued presence among His people” (76).

³⁹⁴ Cf. J. Plastaras, *The God of Exodus*, 258.

³⁹⁵ R.P. Gordon, *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Versions*, 29.

theme of Exodus, and indeed of the Hebrew and Christian canons.³⁹⁶ Thus Moshe Greenberg had already noted in 1969:

It is possible to epitomize the entire story of Exodus in the movement of the fiery manifestation of the divine presence. At first the fire burned momentarily in a bush on the sacred mountain, as God announced his plan to redeem Israel; later it appeared for months in the sight of all Israel as God descended on the mountain to conclude his covenant with the redeemed; finally it rested permanently on the tent-sanctuary, as God's presence settled there. The book thus recounts the stages in the descent of the divine presence to take up its abode for the first time among one of the peoples of the earth.³⁹⁷

Ending where Genesis had begun,³⁹⁸ the book of Exodus marks the great cultic return to the lost Presence of the Creator, the tabernacle mediating Paradise to the exiled descendants of Adam.³⁹⁹

Walton captures the point well when he writes:

As Exodus 40 describes the glory of the Lord filling the temple, the Israelites experience what is, in effect, a return to Eden—not in the sense of full restoration, but in the sense that God's presence again takes up its residence among people, and access to God's presence, however limited, is restored.⁴⁰⁰

Thus Israel becomes a “microcosm of life in creation as God originally intended it,” lived worshipfully in the Presence of God dwelling in—or, perhaps, better: “incarnated” through—the tabernacle, “a kind of *material 'body' for God.*”⁴⁰¹ Because this great crescendo at the end of

³⁹⁶ J.D. Currid refers to it being “a major theme of the book of Exodus” (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 143). F Gorman notes: “At the conclusion of the text narrating the construction of the tabernacle, the Priests state that the cloud cover the tent of meeting and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle (Exod 40.34-38). Yahweh has descended from the mountain and taken up residence in the tabernacle. The tabernacle now reflects the realization of a goal –Yahweh dwelling in the midst of Israel” (*The Ideology of Ritual*, 48).

³⁹⁷ M. Greenberg, *Understanding Exodus*, 16-17.

³⁹⁸ For literary and thematic parallels between the Creation account and the completion of the Tabernacle, cf. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Text and Texture*, 12-13; R.S. Hendel, “The Poetics of Myth in Genesis,” pp 157-70 in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth*, S.D. Breslauer, ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1997) 163-64.

³⁹⁹ A.C. Leder states: “Remarkably, Exodus ends where Genesis begins. Or, to put it another way: The end of Exodus picks up where Adam's and Eve's sin created a disjunction between the presence of God and human history” (“Reading Exodus to Learn,” 30). P. Enns refers to the exile of Adam and Even from Eden as the “first and paradigmatic exile,” and, while not contending that it is the biblical theme under which all others are subsumed, nonetheless states that in “one sense the Bible as a whole can be summarized as the story of God's intervening to bring his chosen people out of a foreign, hostile place and back to the chosen land, back to Eden” (*Exodus*, 285).

⁴⁰⁰ J.H. Walton, “Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of the Book of Leviticus,” *BBR* 11.2 (2001) 296. Walton's further comments on the same page remind one of Noah's Ark: “The sanctuary of Israel represented a small, idealized island of order in a world of threatened chaos. It was a place that preserved equilibrium for God's presence, which in turn was an anchor against disorder.”

⁴⁰¹ T.E. Fretheim, *Exodus*, 240-41, 315 (emphasis original). C. Meyers (*Exodus*, 222-23) notes the divine Presence as the substance of the eschatological hope of the postexilic community, anchored in the promise that God would dwell in their midst (Zech 2.10-11). Cf. John 1.14-16. Bruckner states that YHWH's Presence constituted the true “anointing” of the Tabernacle (*Exodus*, 327); this is also in accord with YHWH's Anointed being named “Immanuel.” Thus J.D. Currid calls the dwelling Presence of YHWH the “Immanuel principle” (*Exodus*, vol. 2, 369).

Exodus also provides the denouement for the beginning of the Exodus narrative,⁴⁰² the theme of slavery and liberation is taken up into the understanding of the cultus: true “freedom” is the life of worship where YHWH is in the midst of his people. The “encounter with God at Sinai represents the beginning of legitimate cultic worship,”⁴⁰³ the beginning of humanity’s return through the gates of YHWH’s holy Mount, and thus a “foretaste of the final joys of life in the Presence of God.”⁴⁰⁴ Timmer’s summation serves well to position the tabernacle cultus within the unfolding drama of the biblical narrative:

God’s unobstructed communion and presence with humanity was the goal of creation, but the entrance of sin meant that this goal could not be achieved apart from the resolution of sin and its consequences. The tabernacle is an intermediate point on the spectrum of God’s presence with humanity, partially because the problem of sin is not fully resolved by the mechanisms of [the] Sinai covenant of which it is a part. Its association with the Sabbath accentuates the expectation that God will act eschatologically to resolve his people’s insurmountable lack of full sanctification and bring those whom he forgives and sanctifies into the full enjoyment of his rest.⁴⁰⁵

CONCLUSION

We have considered the deliverance at sea in Exod 14 as a judicial water ordeal, leading either to destruction/*Sheol* (for the Egyptians) or to the mountain of God (for the Israelites). Completing the pattern through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship, Exod 19-24 portrays the arrival of the Israelites to Mount Sinai and their subsequent worship. Beyond intertextual parallels with the creation and deluge narratives, the Sinai pericope also appears to be informed by the question of the gate liturgy, with Moses (as something of a new Adam) depicted as the only one able to ascend the mountain of God. Finally, within the bounds of the book of Exodus itself the cosmic mountain pattern gives way to the tabernacle cultus informed by it: the קבוצ

⁴⁰² See M. Greenberg’s assessment for the book of Exodus as a literary unit within the Torah, having its own prologue and epilogue, etc., *Understanding Exodus*, 2-3.

⁴⁰³ M. Noth, *Exodus*, 200.

⁴⁰⁴ B.S. Childs, *Exodus*, 239. Similarly, P. Enns writes that the Tabernacle “is constructed in such a way that brings to mind God’s first earthly dwelling with his people, Eden –the first ‘temple.’ And Eden itself represents God’s heavenly throne room, where God’s presence is most full....It [the Tabernacle] is a piece of heaven on earth” (*Exodus*, 301, 506). See also the Eden – temple parallels in M. Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (London: T & T Clark, 2003) 47.

⁴⁰⁵ D.C. Timmer, *Creation, Tabernacle, and Sabbath*, 145.

moves from Sinai to the tabernacle, the three part structure of the tabernacle corresponding to the three parts of the mount with the holy of holies representing the clouded summit. As the peaks of Sinai and the Ararat mount echoed Eden in their respective narratives, so the holy of holies corresponds to Eden and the blessing of the divine Presence. Thus the narrative arc from Gen 1-3 to Exod 40 may be traced from the expulsion from the divine Presence to the gained access to the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus, from the profound descent of Adam to the dramatic “ascent” of the high priest into the Holy of holies (particularly on the Day of Atonement). Having thus considered cosmic mountain ideology (via the pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain of God → for worship) in the sea crossing/Sinai narratives of the exodus account, it has become apparent this narrative prefigures the tabernacle cultus—the cultus itself informed by cosmic mountain ideology.

Conclusion

THESIS SUMMARY

In this thesis we have examined the creation, deluge, and exodus accounts of Genesis and Exodus in light of cosmic mountain ideology, seeking to demonstrate in each narrative the significant cosmogonic/cultic pattern of going through the waters → to the mountain → for worship. As temples are the architectural embodiment of the cosmic mountain, we have argued that these narratives function to explain the logic and necessity of the tabernacle cultus, primarily in its function as mediating the divine Presence. The cosmic mountain, we have sought to show, serves as a symbol for approaching God. Therefore, the idea of a “gate liturgy,” encapsulated by a fundamental question of the cultus of Israel, namely that of Psalms 15 and 24: “Who shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” was highlighted in each narrative. Thus, Adam and Eve must descend the mount upon their transgression, making the return ascent in worship a key feature in the drama leading up to the tabernacle account; Noah, being found just and blameless in his generation (the very qualifications for ascending the mount of YHWH listed in Ps 15.2), is thus allowed entrance into the ark, something of a “prototype” of the tabernacle/temple; and Moses alone is permitted ascent to the summit of Mount Sinai, a role later mimicked in the instructions for the high priest’s annual entrance into the holy of holies. To dwell in the divine Presence via the tabernacle cultus thus presents something of a full-circle, albeit mediated, return to the original intent of creation.

CONTRIBUTION

While there have been notable studies on the cosmic mountain in biblical literature by R.J. Clifford, J.D. Levenson, and G.A. Anderson, the significance of their work has yet to be exploited for its exegetical and hermeneutical possibilities. This we have sought to do by synthesizing their efforts into a more comprehensive cosmological portrait that includes the cosmic waters and the judicial river ordeal, and by unfolding the cosmogonic pattern which, while plainly repeated throughout the Hexateuch, has not to our knowledge been treated.

Furthermore, while recognition of temple symbolism in the creation account(s) of Gen 1-3 has nearly become commonplace in scholarship, the so-called Fall narrative has not as yet been incorporated adequately. Indeed, there has been something of a stigma over the (unjust?) theological weight given this narrative in Christian dogma which appears, by contrast, relatively neglected in the rest of the Hebrew canon. Reading the expulsion narrative via the lens of cosmic mountain ideology, and the gate liturgy in particular, however, makes the exile and descent from the divine Presence the very wellspring of cultic concern: “Who [*now*] shall ascend the mount of YHWH?” so that Gen 3, far from having an insignificant place throughout the rest of the Hebrew canon, becomes something of the foundation story for the religion of Israel (in as much as it explains the purpose of the cultus) and can be seen to initiate a motif that runs like an undercurrent through the biblical literature—certainly through the other narratives we have considered.

Turning to the deluge narrative, it was noted that while temple symbolism has been widely recognized in the creation accounts(s) there has as yet been no significant study of temple symbolism in the deluge narrative—and this in spite of the general scholarly consensus that lexical and thematic intertextuality link these narratives together. Not only did we note the

cosmogonic pattern evident in this narrative, but we also argued that the ark of Noah functions symbolically in the narrative as something of an archetypal tabernacle/temple, the entrance to that ark being subject to a gate liturgy so that Noah, specifically as “the righteous man,” was therefore able to enter. That entrance led to the eschatological deliverance of his household and a remnant of the creatures of the earth, later to spread out from the Ararat mountain to fill the earth, thereby portraying the mount as cosmic (*omphalos*). While some scholars had previously noted parallels between the ark and the tabernacle, this cultic reading encompassing as it does the whole narrative appears almost entirely fresh.

In the book of Exodus the cosmogonic pattern occurs no less than three times: first, in the early narrative of Moses’ life where we find him delivered through the Nile waters and brought to Horeb (Exod 2-3);¹ this deliverance, secondly, foreshadows that of Israel through the Sea to Sinai (Exod 14, 19-24); thirdly, the Song of the Sea (Exod 15) portrays the entire movement of the book—and perhaps even of the Christian canon (cf. v 17)—as well. While, due to space limitations, we only considered the second instance as the broad narrative of the book, it was sufficient to portray plainly Israel’s deliverance as a new creation. Once more, we noted the underlying gate liturgy as the narrative—oft to the point of confusion—portrays Moses as the only one able to ascend the mountain to God. The prominent fact of Moses’ sole prerogative of ascent had, to be sure, been duly noted by scholars in the past but neither understood nor developed within the context of the gate liturgy. That this motif is an underlying concern may even perhaps serve as a key to explaining some of the confusion of ascent in the narrative, such as in 24.13 whereby both Moses and Joshua set out but only Moses ascends, an apparent incongruity which we noted was corrected in the Septuagint by changing the third masculine

¹ While many years go by historically between Moses’ deliverance as a babe and the removal of his sandals before the bush aflame with divine glory, yet literarily the narrative accomplishes this pattern within several verses.

singular verb of ascent into plural. Finally, with the culmination of the narrative when the glory cloud of YHWH descends from the summit of Sinai to rest upon the tabernacle holy of holies, the narrative arc from the expulsion of Gen 3 comes to an at least partial denouement, and the basic thesis that the mountain pre-figured the tabernacle cultus is manifest. Although the high priest's symbolizing the righteous man, even Adam himself, within this cultus is not a new insight, the depths of the cultic drama, particularly in viewing the Day of Atonement as the high priest's ascent into the summit of YHWH's mount and standing as it were where Adam (/Noah/Moses) stood before him, this had not been so fully developed as in our thesis. It is to be hoped that, in the absence of greater historical and archaeological evidence to explain the tabernacle/temple, its symbolism and rituals, the biblical literature itself will continue to unveil, even through narratives previously thought unrelated, something of the drama and beauty of entering the divine Presence via the ordained means of Israel's cult.

FUTURE WORK BASED ON THIS THESIS

While areas of scholarship possibly served by our thesis were mentioned at the close of the introductory chapter, here we merely suggest an outline for the work that would be necessary to grow this thesis into a full-blown biblical theology of the Christian canon based on cosmic mountain ideology. The programmatic verses of Exodus (3.12; 19.4; 25.8) as well as the Song of the Sea (Exod 15.13, 17), summarizing as they do not merely the movement of the book of Exodus but of salvation history *in nuce* (via the cosmogonic pattern), underscore that to dwell in the divine Presence ("worship") is indeed the supreme goal of *Heilsgeschichte*, the bedrock and litmus for a true biblical theology. We will thus trace here the bare pathway of dwelling in the divine Presence thematically, without consideration for the necessary corollary of incorporating

the themes of creation/redemption, kingship, covenant, etc., within the cosmic mountain paradigm.

It will be noted first that, however the pattern may have been utilized in the cultus of Israel, going through the waters → to the mountain → for worship functions in narrative history as an epochal event. While this fact is worked out in the chart below,² the basic point may be deduced simply from the nature of the pattern as a *cosmogonic* pattern, the passage through the waters representing creation. The history of the world (macro-temple) begins through the waters to the Eden mount, and re-begins through the waters to the Ararat mount; the history of Israel (micro-temple) begins through the waters to Mount Sinai and, if the Sea waters are joined to those of the Jordan (collapsing the wilderness), eventually to Mount Zion.³

HISTORY OF THE WORLD (MACROCOSM/TEMPLE)				
Genesis 1 Creation [Eden mount]	Adam	<i>The World That Was</i> Fall	Conflict of Seed	Genesis 7 Judgment
Genesis 8 New Creation [Ararat mount]	Noah, New Adam	<i>The World That Now Is</i> New Fall	Renewed Seed Conflict	Revelation 22 New Judgment
HISTORY OF ISRAEL (MICROCOSM/TEMPLE)				
Exodus Creation [Sinai/Zion mount(s)]	Israel, the New Man	<i>The First Temple</i> Fall, Israel's King	Conflict of Seed	Exile Judgment

Thus one may justly deal with the biblical literature and history (in a canonical approach) by moving from mountain to mountain: Eden to the deluge (Gen 1-7) as the “world that was”; Ararat until the end of the age (Gen 8-Revelation 20) as the “world that now is”; the new Jerusalem/Zion *ad infinitum* (Rev 21-22) as the “world that will be”; and the cultus of Israel as

² This chart, utilizing the historical framework provided in 2 Peter 3.5-7, is taken (with modifications) after W.A. Gage’s *The Gospel of Genesis: Studies in Protology and Eschatology* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2001) pp 16, 72. The reader is referred to this work for scriptural justification of these categories, manifesting their parallels. NOTE: our concern here is only with the first column—to which the mountains have been added.

³ Again, while not working out the precise nature for linking themes of redemption, covenants, etc., to their mount of origin, one can appreciate already that the covenants related to the macro-temple, for example, should not be flatly paralleled to those related to the micro-temple.

micro-temple—followed by the body of Christ⁴—mediating the divine Presence between Sinai and the New Jerusalem. Having examined cosmic mountain ideology with respect to the Eden, Ararat, and Sinai narratives, work yet remains to study the cosmogonic pattern/cosmic mountain ideology in the Moses birth narrative (Exod 2-3) and in the Song of the Sea (Exod 15).⁵

Completing the Hebrew canon, we note that work obviously is required to synthesize (earthly) Zion/Jerusalem. This effort needs to incorporate the nuances of the prophetic material whereby hope appears steadily to shift toward an idealized or heavenly Zion/Jerusalem, a concept already latent—arguably—within the idea of the “pattern” (תַּבְנִיִּית *tabnîl*) of Exod 25.9, 40. The ministry of Christ in the New Testament can be discerned, then, as culminating in the judgment upon the earthly Zion/temple, and the consequent paradigmatic shift toward the heavenly Zion/new Jerusalem, eventually to descend upon the new earth. The movement, briefly sketched, would progress through Christ’s announcement that worship will no longer take place on any earthly mount (cf. John 4.21) to the great declaration by the author of Hebrews (12.22-24) that, in the new covenant, God’s people have:

come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

How this shift has taken place, a burden of argument in Hebrews, would require addressing the cosmic nature of Christ’s atonement, and should be positioned within the concept of the gate liturgy and Day of Atonement (cf. Heb 10, esp. vv 19-20)—demanding greater emphasis upon the priestly/Adamic nature of Christ (incorporating, e.g., Dan 7.13, the “Son of Man” sayings,

⁴ So, e.g., the Incarnation via the Spirit’s hovering over the womb, viewed through a cultic lens, will be portrayed in terms of a new temple (cf. Gen 1.2, etc.).

⁵ For both of which we have done extensive work yet, due to space limitations, could not include in this thesis, but hope to publish elsewhere.

etc.).⁶ Thus, rather than abolishing the beauty and drama of approaching the mountain of God in worship, the work of Christ will be seen to have enabled this cultic approach across the earth, as by faith the nations stream to the heavenly Mount Zion each LORD's Day—until the heavenly Zion/Jerusalem finally descends upon the new earth (Rev 21.1-2) and faith becomes sight. This outline thus provides a pathway for utilizing the present study toward a biblical theology of the Christian canon—one which moves from creation to new creation, while incorporating the heart of priestly theology and the work of Christ via the atonement, and which relies upon the budding (and already fruitful) area of biblical studies focused upon the temple.

⁶ C. Fletcher-Louis has already done notable work on the priesthood of Christ. See, e.g., his "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 1," *JSHJ* 4.2 (2006) 155-75; "Jesus as the High Priestly Messiah: Part 2," *JSHJ* 5.1 (2007) 57-79.

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